

Pearls from the Path

A Collection of Anecdotes and Stories from
Islamic History.

Volume Two



Compiled by
Moulānā Afzal Ismail



*In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds. And
peace, blessings and salutations be upon His Prophet,
Nabī Muḥammad ﷺ.*

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولَئِكَ الْأَلْبَابِ

*Indeed, in their stories there is a lesson
for men of understanding.*

- Sūrah Yūsuf, verse 111

Transliteration Key

إ - 'ا	ض - d
ا - a	ط - t
ب - b	ظ - z
ت - t	ع - 'a, 'i, 'u
ث - th	غ - gh
ج - j	ف - f
ح - h	ق - q
خ - kh	ك - k
د - d	ل - l
ذ - dh	م - m
ر - r	ن - n
ز - z	و - u
س - s	ه - h
ش - sh	ي - y, i
ص - s	

﴿ - Used after the name of Allāh, translated as, “Praise be to Allāh Who is pure and elevated.”

﴿ - Used after the name of Nabī Muḥammad ﷺ, translated as, “May Allāh’s peace and blessing be upon him.”

﴿ - Used after the name of a prophet of Allāh, translated as, “May Allāh’s peace be upon him.”

﴿ , ﴿ - Used after the name of a Ṣahābī (companion) of Nabī Muḥammad ﷺ, translated as, “May Allāh be pleased with him / her.”

﴿ - Used after the names of more than one Ṣahābī (companion) of Nabī Muḥammad ﷺ, translated as, “May Allāh be pleased with them.”

﴿ , ﴿ - Used after the name of a pious person, translated as, “May Allāh’s mercy be upon him / her.”

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Foreword

by Muftī Zubair Bayat حفظه الله

Director: Darul Ihsan Islamic Services Centre

Allāh ﷺ informs Nabī Karīm ﷺ in the Holy Qur'ān:

وَكُلَّا نَقْصٌ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا تُبَغِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادُكَ

"And all that We relate to you (O Muḥammad ﷺ) of the news of the Messengers is in order that We may make strong and firm your heart thereby." (Sūrah Hūd, verse 120)

This proves the efficacy of the narratives and incidents of the pious personalities. Almighty Himself explains the benefit and wisdom in that it serves to strengthen and inspire the noble heart of even Nabī Karīm ﷺ. If this is the case with the greatest of the great, Nabī Karīm ﷺ, then lesser mortals would certainly benefit tremendously and be greatly inspired through good and beneficial anecdotes.

Junaid Baghdadi رحمه الله observed regarding good anecdotes and incidents that they are "a force among the forces of Allah", i.e. they are a means of conquering and reforming the hearts of people. Indeed, the *Islahi Majalis* (spiritual gatherings) of the pious elders comprise to a great extent of thought provoking incidents and anecdotes, thereby presenting the moral in an impactful and captivating manner. The lesson learnt in this way is much better remembered and more easily implemented in daily life, as it is highly inspirational.

This book, Pearls from the Path (Volume 2) is an amazing composition of very thought provoking incidents, which beautifully capture and fulfil the above-stated objectives. The second volume is a seamless follow through on the much acclaimed first volume, and will prove to be equally beneficial to the readers if not more, Inshā-Allāh.

One of the unique and outstanding features of this work is the short

¹ Nabī literally means prophet, however, when mentioned together with ﷺ it commonly refers to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

and succinct lessons or morals at the end of each anecdote from the pen of the author which greatly enhances the efficacy of the book. Besides the general Muslim public who will certainly benefit from this book, it is especially recommended for people in the field of education, *islah* and *tarbiyyah*, who will find it an exceptional guide and a valuable resource.

May Almighty Allāh ﷺ accept this service from Moulānā Afzal Sahib in a befitting manner, reward him abundantly and accept him for greater works in the service of Islam and the Ummah in the future.

Muftī Zubair Bayat

13 Jumadal Ula 1431 / 29 April 2010

Foreword

by Maulānā Sulaiman Moola
Senior Lecturer at Dārul 'Ulūm Zakariyya

One of the easiest, yet ‘difficult’, ways to procure reward for oneself is to acknowledge the efforts of others and pay tribute to them. Imām Aḥmad رضي الله عنه has narrated that once the Muḥājirīn came to Nabī ﷺ and said, “O Nabī of Allāh ﷺ, we fear that the Anṣār have secured all the reward for themselves, thereby not leaving anything for us.” Nabī ﷺ replied, “This will not happen provided you praise them and make du'a' for them.” Hence, in the light of the above, I would like to hereby formally congratulate the author for his sterling work.

There can be no doubt that one of the most effective methods of empowering oneself spiritually is to study the lives of the pious. Ḥadrat 'Ā'isha رضي الله عنها is reported to have said,

اذا شتم ان يطيب المجلس فعليكم بذكر عمر بن الخطاب

“Flavour your gatherings with the mention of ‘Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه.”

Imām Shāfi'i رضي الله عنه has also said,

قد مات قوم و ما ماتت مكارهم

“Many people have physically died but their character and noble legacy has kept them alive.”

I, therefore, strongly encourage and implore one and all to make this a ‘must read.’ May the Almighty accept the efforts of the compiler and extend its benefits to all. Āmīn.

Moulānā Sulaiman Moola
4 Jumadal Ula 1431 / 20 April 2010

Preface

All praise belongs to Allāh ﷺ, the Creator, Nourisher and Sustainer of the universe. Peace, blessings and salutations be upon the best of Allāh's ﷺ creation, our master and leader, Nabī ﷺ.

Stories, anecdotes and tales of the past leave an indelible impression on the mind of adults and children alike. A student of Islamic history is impressed and overawed by the sheer volume of narrative and anecdotal content available in Arabic literature. A great deal of work remains to be done in translating and presenting this material to an English-speaking audience. These factors coupled with the encouragement and kind requests of my teachers, friends and readers, have inspired me to devote considerable time and effort in completing the second volume of *Pearls from the Path*.

As was the case with the first volume, complex and technical definitions of Islamic terms have been avoided. Where necessary, a concise explanation is provided as part of the text. Where a more detailed explanation was required, it has been included in a footnote.

An earnest attempt has been made to trace each of the narrations from authentic Arabic sources. This has been achieved with a few exceptions from Urdu and English, which are accordingly referenced. Where an incident has been found in more than one Arabic source, the first reference has been mentioned in full.

I am sincerely grateful to all those who assisted in this project, especially my beloved teachers, for their inspiration and guidance; Muftī Husain Kadodia, Muftī Muhammad Seedat, Moulāna Ebrahim Bham, Moulāna Goolam Muhammad, Younus Ismail, Fawzia Ismail, Dr Ahmad Badat and Aadilah Chothia for the proof-reading; my wife, for her encouragement and ideas and all those who assisted in other ways. May Allāh ﷺ reward them all abundantly in this world and the Hereafter for rendering their invaluable assistance towards the accomplishment of this project. May Allāh ﷺ accept this truly humble effort and make it a source of salvation for me, my parents, family, teachers and well-wishers.

Afzal Ismail

28 Rabī'ul Āakhir 1431 / 14 April 2010



A Pious Woman Teaches Man Etiquette

Muhammad ibn Sulaimān Al-Qurashī says that he was once walking on the road to Yemen, when he came across a young boy, who was singing some couplets in praise of Allāh ﷺ. Muhammad continues: I went up to him and greeted.

He responded, “I will not return your greeting until you fulfil the right I have upon you.”

I enquired, “What right are you talking about?”

He replied, “I follow the teachings of the friend of Allāh, Ibrāhīm ﷺ. I do not partake of breakfast or supper every day, until I have walked a mile or two in search of a guest. I would like you to join me for a meal.”

I accepted his invitation. He was exceedingly pleased and I followed him. We continued walking, until we arrived at a tent made of animal skin. As we approached it, he called out, “O my sister!”

From inside the tent a young girl replied, “Yes, I am here.”

He exclaimed, “Our guest has arrived.”

She responded, “Can you please wait a while so that I can express my gratitude to Allāh ﷺ for sending a guest to us.” She then proceeded to perform two rakāts of Ṣalāh.

The young boy then ushered me towards the tent. I entered and he made me sit down. He took a knife and proceeded to slaughter a goat. As I was sitting in the tent, my gaze fell upon the young girl. She was exceedingly beautiful. I continued staring at her clandestinely.

She noticed my glances and exclaimed, “Please stop! Do you not know that the master of Yathrib, Nabī ﷺ, has mentioned that a lustful gaze is adultery of the eyes? I do not wish to rebuke you, but would like to teach you some etiquette so that you abstain from casting a gaze towards me again.”

When it was time to sleep, my young host and I slept outside, while the young girl slept in the tent. But, throughout the night, I heard somebody

reciting Qur'ān in a melodious voice. As morning dawned upon us, I asked the young boy, "Whose voice was that?"

He answered, "That was my sister. She remains awake the entire night."

I remarked, "Young boy, you should have remained awake the entire night instead of her. Being a woman, she is naturally weaker than you."

He smiled and said, "Allāh ﷺ has blessed her with the good fortune of worshipping Him and has not granted me the same blessing."¹



May Allāh ﷺ be pleased with the sterling Muslim women whose remarkable anecdotes grace the pages of Islamic history. Their beauty is true beauty. Film actresses and fashion models, whose lives revolve around sin and transgression, are mere stones when compared to these gems.



Forbidding Evil with Sincerity

Abul Ḥusain An-Nūrī ﷺ was a righteous man, who strictly abstained from futile activities. However, when he noticed something wrong taking place, he would intervene, even if it invited difficulty upon himself. On one occasion, while preparing for Ṣalāh, he saw a boat carrying thirty jugs. Each of the jugs had the inscription 'lutf' (grace) written on it. When he read this, he suspected that they contained wine, as he was unaware of any such item for sale.

He asked the boatman, "What do these jugs contain?"

The boatman crudely answered, "What does it matter to you?"

This response increased An-Nūrī's desire to ascertain what the jugs contained.

¹ Rawdatul 'Uqalā', p 259

He again enquired, "Please tell me what these jugs contain?"

The boatman retorted, "What does it matter to you? You are a worthless Sūfi! The jugs are filled with wine for Mu'tadid. He intends serving it in his gathering."

An-Nūrī ﷺ asked in amazement, "Is it really wine?"

"Yes," replied the boatman.

He then asked the boatman, "Can you please hand me that pole on your boat?"

This request infuriated the boatman who instructed his servant, "Give it to him! I would like to see what he does with it."

An-Nūrī ﷺ took the pole in his hands, climbed up onto the boat and began breaking the jugs of wine, despite the vehement protests of the boatman. When he reached the last jug, he stopped. An-Nūrī ﷺ was promptly arrested and brought before Mu'tadid, who was known to use his sword before his tongue. People were convinced that An-Nūrī ﷺ would soon be killed.

An-Nūrī ﷺ continues : "I was brought before him whilst he sat on his iron throne. In his hand was a stick, which he was turning around. When he saw me, he asked, "Who are you?"

I replied, "A supervisor."

He asked, "And who made you a supervisor?"

I answered, "The One who made you a ruler, also made me a supervisor, O Amīrul-Mu'minīn."

He bowed his head in silence. After a few moments, he raised his head and asked, "Why did you do this?"

I replied, "Out of kindness to you, I extended my hand in destroying that which was evil for you, but I fell short of completing the task."

Again he bowed his head, contemplating over what I had said. After he had raised his head, he asked, "How is it that you broke all the jugs, except this one?"

I replied, "There is a reason for this. Please allow me to explain."

"You may proceed," he responded.

I continued, "O Amīrul-Mu'minīn, I broke the jugs due to my responsibility to Allāh ﷺ for upholding the truth. My heart pounded with the awe of truth and the fear of accountability to Allāh ﷺ. Fear of the

creation vanished from my heart. In this state, I proceeded with my task of destroying the jugs. When I reached the last jug, I perceived some pride entering my heart due to the thought that I had challenged somebody as formidable as you. This caused me to stop. If my original state of mind had persisted, I would have destroyed all the wine jugs of the world without any fear."

He then said, "Go, I free you, despite my dislike for your destructive act."

An-Nūrī رض then left for Baṣrah and returned to Baghdaḍ after Mu'taḍid had passed away.¹



Sincerity should be the primary motivating factor when encouraging good and forbidding evil.



Trial of Faith

On the 2 May 1864 (1280 Hijrī), an English judge, by the name of Idors, heard a case in the court of Ambala in the Punjāb province. It was during the days of the British occupation of India. Beside the judge, sat four distinguished men of the British administration, who had advised and assisted in presenting their views on the case at hand. The accused comprised of eleven men, whose appearance and features indicated that they were quite innocent and honourable. However, they were on trial as criminals and accused of plotting against the British administration in India. The charge against them was that of providing assistance to Sayyid Imām Ahmad ibn 'Irfān Ash-Shahīd رض and the renowned warrior Shaikh Ismail Ash-Shahīd رض at the Afghanistan

¹ *Iḥyā' 'Ulūmuddīn*, vol 2, p 356

border. They were suspected of providing finance and dispatching soldiers from India by means of an elaborate system of intelligence. They had developed a special language of communication and even succeeded in using Englishmen to further their mission of assisting the rebellion. They were eventually detected, when a Muslim informer in the British army reported them to the authorities. Their network was traced to Patna, Thanesar and Lahore and they were accordingly arrested. Charges were brought against them and they now faced the judge, who was about to pass his judgement against them.

The court was packed as this particular case had attracted the attention of everybody. The hour of judgement had arrived. Eyes were fixed and ears listened attentively. Hearts skipped a beat and the courtroom was silent.

The judge delivered his verdict in an angry and authoritative tone, almost as if he was an angry father speaking to his troublesome son. He said, "Ja'far, you are an intelligent man and well-acquainted with the law of the land. You are from amongst the leaders and high-ranking citizens of the nation, but you have wasted your intelligence and talent in plotting against the state. You served as an accomplice in providing finance and soldiers from India to the rebels. You resisted and opposed the system. You have not proven yourself to be loyal and faithful to the government. I, hereby, pass upon you the death sentence. All your property and assets shall be confiscated. After hanging, your dead body will not be handed over to your family. Instead, you will be buried in disgrace amongst the graves of criminals. I will be pleased and contented when I see you hanged."

The young man, Muḥammad Ja'far, listened to the judge with complete tranquility and dignity. He was not shaken nor disturbed in any way.

After the judge had completed his statement, Muḥammad Ja'far remarked, "The lives and souls of men are in the control of Allāh ﷺ. He gives life and death. O Judge, you have no power over life and death. You do not even know who of us will die first."

فَوَاللهِ مَا أَدْرِي وَأَنِي لَاْوَجْلُ عَلَى أَيِّنَا تَعْدُو الْمُنْتَهِيَّ أَوْلَى

"By Allāh, I do not know but I am fearful which of us will have to face death first."

The judge was furious and totally enraged at what he had heard but could do nothing, as he had already passed judgement. Muḥammad Ja'far, on the other hand, was ecstatic and his face was beaming with joy. It was almost as if the images of paradise, its palaces and damsels were playing in his mind. It was as if he was contemplating over the verses of the poet:

هذا الذي كانت الايام تنتظر فليوف الله اقوام بما نذروا

*"This is what the passage of days had been anticipating,
Now, men should fulfil their promise to Allāh ﷺ."*

People were shocked at what they witnessed. A senior British official, by the name of Barson, came to Muḥammad Ja'far and exclaimed, "I have never seen anything like this before. Despite your death sentence, you appear to be quite happy and contented!"

Muḥammad Ja'far replied, "Why should I not be pleased and contented when Allāh ﷺ has granted me martyrdom in His path. You, O poor man, will never be able to fathom this sweetness."

The judge similarly passed the death sentence on his two co-accused. One of them was Moulānā Yahyā 'Alī As-Ṣādiq Būrī ﷺ, who was the leader of the group. The signs of piety and righteousness were clearly visible on him. He similarly accepted the verdict with joy and gratitude. The other was a young man, by the name of Al-Ḥaj Muḥammad Shafī ﷺ, a wealthy trader of note, from Punjab. The remaining eight, were sentenced with permanent exile.

People who were present at the trial, listened to the ruling with sadness and sorrow. Many began to weep. Men and women lined the streets to have a glimpse of these oppressed men, as they were led to their prison cells. There, they were stripped of their clothing and forced into prison uniforms. Each of them was locked into a dark tiny cell, with scarcely any air circulation therein. The heat was unbearable and the nights, especially, were intolerable. A tag was handed to them, allowing them to spend a portion of the night in the open grounds of the prison. During the day, they were confined to their tiny cells. Very few people

would have survived under such conditions for even a week, let alone a month.

When the doors were opened, they were under the watchful surveillance of the guards, most of whom were non-Muslims. Moulānā Yaḥyā 'Alī ﷺ seized the opportunity and displayed the gracious model set by the Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ. He would address the guards,

الْأَرْبَابُ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أُمَّ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

“Are many gods better or Allāh, the One, the Irresistible?”
(Sūrah Yūsuf, verse 39)

Many of them were reduced to tears upon hearing his soul-edifying message and, when the Moulānā was moved to another cell, they would become saddened by his separation from them.

In this way, the learned Moulānā planted the seeds of *Tawḥīd* (Oneness of Allāh ﷺ) and *Īmān* (faith) into the hearts of many of the inmates of the prison. Many accepted Islam and many others repented from their former lives of sin. He capitalised upon every opportunity to encourage good and forbid evil.

The prison authorities began preparing the hanging ropes in full view of the accused, who observed the scene before them calmly and fearlessly. Moulānā Yaḥyā 'Alī ﷺ appeared to be most cheerful. It was almost as if his passion for paradise had made him feel that he was already experiencing its bounties. His quest for eternal bliss was sufficient bliss in itself. Ecstatically and longingly, he could be seen hymning the verses of poetry recited by the companion of Nabī ﷺ, Khubaib رضي الله عنه, as he was about to be hanged,

وَلَنَسْتُ أَبْلِي حِينَ أُقْتَلُ مُسْلِمًا عَلَى أَيِّ شِقٍّ كَانَ اللَّهُ مَصْرِعِي

وَذَلِكَ فِي ذَاتِ الْإِلَهِ وَإِنْ يَشَأْ يُتَارُكُ عَلَى أَوْصَالِ شِلْوَهُ مُزَّعِ

*“I do not mind if I am killed as a Muslim,
on which side I fall in the path of Allāh.*

*My dying is for the sake of Allāh and if He wills,
He will bless the amputated limbs of a body cut into pieces.”¹*

His companions were no different. Their faces glowed with extreme joy and delight. Their souls were at complete peace and their hearts were content. They performed their prayers with complete submission and vigour. Their lives were one of remembrance and glorification of Allāh ﷺ, recitation of Qur’ān, endless bliss and poetic verses.

Amazingly, the judge who had passed the death sentence on them, died soon after delivering his verdict. Barson, the British officer, who had been responsible for the arrest of Muhammad Ja’far, became insane. For an entire day, the insanity held sway over him, and he finally died a horrendous death. It turned out just as Muhammad Ja’far had mentioned:

رب أشعث أغرب لو أقسم على الله لأبره

“There are those, although covered in dust and with dishevelled hair, when they beg Allāh ﷺ, He fulfils their prayers.”

Many British and European visitors heard about the case, and came to the prison to observe these amazing prisoners who were rejoicing over the verdict passed by their enemies. They were completely dumb-struck at their contentment and enthusiasm.

Some of them would ask, “Why do you have no fear, when you are about to be hanged?”

They would reply, “This is true martyrdom. No bounty can provide the joy that martyrdom brings.”

They would then return to the British administrators and relate what they had seen and heard. It would intensify their rage, but they could do nothing. If they freed the prisoners, they would be freeing an enemy which had conspired against the state. When free, they would revert to their former plot. If they were hanged, they would be assisting them in achieving their desired goal. How could they utilise all their resources

¹ Bukhārī

to please and assist an enemy? Both the options were unacceptable, and they were constrained to reconsider the judgement. After pondering over the case at length, they identified a middle course between killing them and freeing them.

After a time, the British governor of the district arrived at the prison to deliver the revised judgement on appeal against the three who were to be killed, "You rebels would love to be hanged and you consider it martyrdom. We will not assist you in reaching your desired goal. We will not grant you that pleasure. In this respect, we have decided to abrogate the judgement of the death sentence against you. Instead, we have decided to permanently banish you to Ceylon." The hair and beards of the accused were then cut. Moulānā Yahyā 'Alī ﷺ picked up the hair of his beard and remarked, "What you have earned is in the path of Allāh ﷺ."

The tables had turned. By revising their judgement, the British had practically hanged themselves with the very ropes they had prepared for their Muslim 'enemies'.

The prisoners were then forced into hard labour. Moulānā Yahyā 'Alī ﷺ was assigned the task of lifting buckets from a well. The buckets were so bulky and weighty, that strong young men would have been strained to lift them. The elderly man was exhausted and drained by his excessive worship, nightly vigils and lengthy prison sentence. The days were hot and his health deteriorated to the extent that he would pass blood when urinating. But, he patiently persevered with hope and prayer. Later, he was transferred to an easier form of labour. He resigned himself to this with true dedication and trust. He would even encourage his fellow inmates to do likewise, saying, "When you receive food and clothing here, why should you not fulfil your assigned duties with trust and care."

The Moulānā continued encouraging the inmates towards good and forbidding them from evil. He passed his days as an inviter to Allāh ﷺ and a propagator of righteousness. As a result, many prisoners repented from their previous lives of sin and turned their focus towards Allāh ﷺ.

He was then transferred from Ambala to Lahore, where he stayed for an entire year. Here, he was placed in the midst of hardened criminals, such as violent thieves and highway robbers. His character and teachings created within them a dislike for crime, sin and transgression. He

graciously presented the noble Islamic characteristics of piety and purity and affectionately encouraged them towards obedience, repentance and spiritual reformation. He invited them towards *Tawhīd*, *Ṣalāh* and fasting and warned them about the punishment of Allāh ﷺ and His anger. By virtue of his concerted efforts, many hardened criminals sincerely repented to Allāh ﷺ, pledged to follow the teachings of Islam and perform *Ṣalāh*.

Amongst the inmates was a man from Baluschistan, who was extremely violent and rebellious. He had attacked and assaulted many a guard with his chains. He would not follow instructions or complete the tasks assigned to him. He had been punished on a number of occasions, but showed no remorse. The prison authorities had lost all hope of dealing with him. Occasionally, he would spend a night close to the Moulānā, whose wise words began to affect his heart. His attitude changed, motivating him to follow instructions. His chains were removed and he began performing his five daily *Ṣalāh*. He would cry out of the fear of Allāh ﷺ, and those who saw him, bore testimony that he had been transformed into a true friend of Allāh ﷺ.

In this way, the Moulānā and his group were transferred from one prison to another. Finally, on the 8 December 1865, they were deported to Port Blair on the island of Andaman.¹ After two years of worship and preaching, the Moulānā passed away on 20 February 1868 (1284 Hijrī). Muḥammad Ja'far رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was eventually pardoned and freed on the 22 January 1883 after he had spent eighteen years in prison.²



Fearlessness in the face of death, is a sublime characteristic of those who have complete conviction in the truth of Islam and the divine reward promised by Allāh ﷺ.



¹ Port Blair is the capital city of the Andaman Islands, where the infamous torture cells of Kala Pani were constructed. Many Muslim scholars and soldiers, who opposed British rule in India, were brought here as prisoners and forced into hard labour.

² *Idhā Habbat Rīḥul Ḥimān*, p 194



A Plot of Shaiṭān

Abū Hurairah ﷺ narrates: Nabī ﷺ appointed me to safeguard the Sadaqat al-Fiṭr of Ramadān. A person arrived and began taking handfuls of the foodstuff. I took hold of him and warned, “By Allāh, I will take you to Allāh’s Nabī ﷺ.”

He pleaded, “I am poor. I have many dependants and am in great need.” I released him.

In the morning, Nabī ﷺ enquired from me, “What did your prisoner do yesterday?”

I replied, “O Nabī of Allāh, the person complained of poverty and of having many dependants, so, I pitied him and released him.”

Nabī ﷺ said, “Indeed, he spoke a lie, but he will return.”

I believed that he would return as Nabī ﷺ had predicted, and waited for him watchfully. Upon his return, he began taking handfuls of foodstuff. I caught hold of him again, and said, “I will definitely take you to Nabī ﷺ.”

He pleaded, “Leave me, for I am very needy and have many dependants. I promise I will not come back again.” I pitied him and let him go.

In the morning Nabī ﷺ asked me, “What did your prisoner do?”

I replied, “O Nabī of Allāh ﷺ, he complained of his dire need and of many dependants, so I took pity on him and set him free.”

Nabī ﷺ said, “Indeed, he spoke a lie, but he will return.”

I waited for him watchfully for the third time. He arrived and again began stealing handfuls of foodstuff. I caught hold of him and warned, “I will surely take you to Nabī ﷺ as it is the third time you promised not to return, yet you consistently break your promise each time and return.”

He responded, “Leave me alone and I will teach you some words through which Allāh will benefit you.”

I asked, “What are they?”

He replied, “Whenever you go to bed, recite Āyatul-Kursī,

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُومُ

until you complete the full verse. If you do so, Allāh will appoint a guard over you for your protection and Shaiṭān will not approach you till the morning.” I then released him.

In the morning, Nabī ﷺ asked me, “What did your prisoner do?”

I replied, “He claimed that he would teach me some words through which Allāh ﷺ would benefit me, so I let him go.”

Nabī ﷺ asked, “What are they?”

I explained what Shaiṭān had advised me.

Nabī ﷺ said, “He spoke the truth, although he is a grave liar. Do you know who you were talking to for the past three nights, O Abū Hurairah?”

I answered, “No.”

Nabī ﷺ said, “That was Shaiṭān.”¹



Shaiṭān has a plethora of tricks which he uses to overpower men.

~

Āyatul-Kursī is a powerful du‘ā’ for protection. Every Muslim should endeavour to memorise it and recite it frequently.



Kindness to a Dog

Hasan ibn ‘Alī ﷺ narrates that he was once passing by a garden in Madīnah, when he saw a slave who had a piece of bread in his hand. He would eat a piece from it and feed a piece of it to a dog

¹ Bukhārī

that was with him. In this way, he and the dog shared the bread equally between them.

Ḩasan Ḥ asked him, “Why have you given half of the bread to the dog? You could have had more of it to eat for yourself by concealing it from the dog.”

The slave replied, “I am too shy to deceive the dog, while looking at it in the eye.”

Ḩasan Ḥ asked him, “Whose slave are you?”

He replied, “I am the slave of ‘Abbān ibn ‘Uthmān.”

Ḩasan Ḥ enquired, “And who does this garden belong to?”

“To ‘Abbān,” the slave answered.

Ḩasan Ḥ said to him, “I request you to wait here until I return.”

He proceeded to the owner and purchased the slave and the garden from him.

When he returned, he said to the slave, “I have purchased you.”

The slave stood up, saying, “I have heard you and obedience is to Allāh ﷺ, His Nabī ﷺ and you, my owner.”

Ḩasan Ḥ explained further, “I have freed you from slavery for the pleasure of Allāh ﷺ and I give this garden to you as a gift.”

The slave remarked, “O my master, I too give the garden in the path of Allāh ﷺ.”¹



When a man has fear of accountability in the Court of Allāh ﷺ, he will automatically abstain from deception, lies and dishonesty when dealing with every creation of Allāh ﷺ.



¹ Tārīkh Dimishq, vol 13, p 246



Just Rulers

Cow's Milk and Divine Blessings

Ībn 'Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that a king decided to conceal his identity and set out on a tour of his kingdom. After some time, he arrived at the home of a man who owned a cow. When the cow returned from grazing, it gave milk equivalent to that of thirty cows. The king was astonished and thought of taking the cow for himself. The next morning, the cow was again sent out to graze and it returned in the evening. This time, however, it could only give half the quantity of the milk it had given the previous day. When the king saw this, he called the owner, and asked, "Please inform me regarding your cow. Did it graze in a different pasture, or drink water from a different place today?"

The owner replied, "It has neither grazed in a different pasture nor did it drink from another water source."

But, the king insisted, "How was it that its milk has decreased to half?"

The owner replied, "The king was considering taking it for himself and this has caused its milk to decrease. The reason for this is that the *barakah* (divine blessings) is removed whenever the king commits or intends committing an act of oppression on his subjects."

The king asked, "How do you know this about the king?"

The man answered, "Believe me, what I have told you is the truth."

Quietly, the king took an oath in the Name of Allāh عَزَّوَجَلَّ that he would not take the cow for himself. The next morning, the cow was sent out to graze and it returned in the evening. When it was milked, it again gave milk equivalent to that of thirty cows. The king learnt his lesson and thought to himself, "When I oppress or decide to oppress my subjects,

the *barakah* is removed. From this day, I shall rule with justice and treat my subjects well.”¹

Lesson from a Sugarcane Orchard

One day, a person delivered a lecture in the court of Jalālud Dawlah Malikshah Saljūkī. During his discourse, he mentioned the following incident:

A Persian king, during one of his journeys, separated himself from his troops and found himself at the gate of an orchard. He entered and requested for some water to drink. A young girl presented some sweetened cold water to him. He drank it and found it very delicious.

The king asked her, “How is this drink prepared?”

She replied, “We grow sugarcane and squeeze it with our own hands. This is the juice that is produced from it.”

The king requested, “I would like to have some more.”

The young girl was unaware that it was the Persian king she was speaking to, and left to bring some more.

In the meantime, the king thought, “I should take possession of this orchard and give them another one in return.”

After a short while, the girl returned, crying, “Our king has changed his intention for the worse.”

The king asked, “How do you know this?”

She replied, “Previously, I used to get as much juice as I desired without any difficulty. Now, after much effort, I can only squeeze a small quantity.”

The king realised the truth of her words and abandoned his intention of usurping the orchard. He again asked, “Bring me some more juice and this time I am sure you will succeed.”

She left and returned, smiling. In her hand, she had a full bowl of juice which she presented to the king.

After hearing the incident, Jalālud Dawlah said to the orator, “Why do you not mention the incident of the Persian king, who entered an orchard and requested the keeper for some grapes. The keeper declined,

¹ Al-Jāmī’ Li Shu’bil Īmān, vol 9, p 542, Sirājul Mulūk

saying, “This is not possible, as the king has not yet taken what is due to him and I cannot betray his trust.”

The courtiers were amazed at the ability of the king to present an incident of a similar nature. He had successfully counteracted the orator’s story, exhorting the king to deal kindly with his subjects, with another story, exhorting the subjects to be faithful to their king.¹

A King’s Folly

In Isqandariyyah, there was a fishing area which was open to all. The fish were in abundance, and even the children would catch them with pieces of cloth. The king decided to close the area off for fishing and from then onwards, very few fish were ever caught.²



The secret thoughts, intentions and actions of those in authority have an impact on their subjects. Noble intentions and deeds produce good results, while evil intentions and deeds remove *barakah* (divine blessings).



Patience is Rewarding

Yazīd ibn Hārūn رضي الله عنه was a great scholar and muhaddith. He relates his story, “I left my family and travelled for many years in search of the knowledge of Ḥadīth. When I arrived in Baghdaḍ, I heard that there was a *Tābi’ī* (successor of the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم) who was in the army ranks. I called on him and he narrated to me the following Ḥadīth : Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه narrates that Nabī ﷺ said, “If Allāh afflicts a person with

1 Wafayātul Aa’yān, vol 5, p 285

2 Sirājul Mulūk, p 46

a misfortune, he should be patient, he should be patient, he should be patient.”

The *Tābi’ī* then said that he would not narrate any further *Hadīth*. I then decided to return to my home in *Wāsīt*. I reached late at night and decided not to knock at the door to avoid disturbing the family. I opened the door, and entered. My wife was sleeping on the top floor, so I ascended. When I reached her, she was asleep, but lying beside her was a young man! I took a stone in my hand, and, as I was about to strike him with it, I remembered the words of the *Hadīth* I had heard from the *Tābi’ī* regarding patience. Two or three times I thought of striking him, but each time I refrained, after pondering over the words of the *Hadīth*. After a while, my wife awoke. When she saw me, she awakened the young man, saying, “Wake up! Your father has come back home.”

This young man was our son. I had left my wife, while she was pregnant and she had subsequently given birth to him. I then realised the *barakah* (divine blessings) of the *Hadīth* that I had heard from the *Tābi’ī*.¹



Patience and contemplation result in sound judgements as opposed to haste and impulsiveness.



Allāh ﷺ Protects a Chaste Woman

Apious person narrates: I was once making *Tawāf* of the Ka‘bah when I heard a young woman saying, “O most honourable Allāh, Your pledge exists since time immemorial and I remain steadfast upon it.”

I asked, “What is this pledge between you and Allāh ﷺ?”

¹ Āthārul Bilād Wa Akhbārul ‘Ibād, p 480

She replied, "It is with regard to a strange incident that occurred in my life. I was once in a ship on the ocean, when a severe storm struck and the wind caused everything on board to be destroyed. All the passengers drowned, except myself, this baby I have in my arms and a slave. I managed to cling tenaciously onto a piece of wood with my baby and the slave did the same. When the sun rose, the slave began to move towards us by wading through the water with his hands. Upon reaching us, he mounted the wood we were holding onto and tried to seduce me.

I said to him, "O slave of Allāh ﷺ, we are in a predicament wherein we have little hope of safety through obedience to Allāh ﷺ. What will happen to us if we choose the path of disobedience?"

He ignored my question and retorted, "Leave me alone! By the oath of Allāh, I will not be prevented from fulfilling my intention."

He stretched forth his hand, snatched the baby from me and threw it into the sea. At this point, I lifted my gaze to the heavens and exclaimed, "O Allāh ﷺ, You are closer to a man than his heart. Protect me from this slave by Your strength and power. You have power over all things." Immediately, a creature emerged from the sea, swallowed the slave in a single gulp and disappeared beneath the water.

The waves continued to toss me around, until I reached an island. I related my story to the inhabitants and they were astounded. With bowed heads they exclaimed, "You have an amazing story to tell but, we have something even more amazing to relate to you. We were sailing on the ocean, when a creature emerged from the water in front of our ship. It was carrying a little baby on its back. We then heard a voice, saying, "Take this child, or you will perish." One of us stretched forth our hands and took the child from the back of the creature. It then vanished into the water. Immediately, we all took an oath to Allāh ﷺ that we would not commit any sin from that day onwards."

They handed the baby over to me. My experience is from the amazing signs of Allāh's ﷺ greatness.¹

¹ Rawdūr Rayyāhīn Fī Ḥikāyātīs Ṣāliḥīn, p 241; Az Zahrul Fā'iḥ Fī Dhikri Man Tanazzaha 'Anidh Dhunūbī Wal Qabā'iḥ



Allāh's ﷺ assistance and mercy comes in unexpected ways to those who obey His commands.



Compassion in the Battlefield

Qādhī ibn Shaddād رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was the personal advisor of Ṣalāḥuddīn Ayyūbī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. They travelled together on a number of expeditions. He explains: “I was riding in the service of Ṣalāḥuddīn in an expedition against the Europeans, when a soldier brought a woman to us. She was crying uncontrollably and repeatedly beating her chest. It was obvious that she was seriously traumatised.

The soldier explained, “This woman has come from the European ranks and asked to be taken to the Sultān, so I brought her here.” The Sultān asked an interpreter to question her regarding her story.

She explained, “Muslim thieves entered my tent last night and stole my baby girl. I have been crying out for help throughout the night. I was advised by my ruler, ‘Approach the Muslim Sultān, who is known to be very merciful. We will permit you to go to him and seek his assistance in finding your child.’ They then directed me to you. I have no hope of finding my child except through you.”

The Sultān was overwhelmed with compassion for her and tears flowed from his eyes. Driven by his sense of generosity, he commanded one of his soldiers to proceed to the market at the army camp and enquire regarding the child. He placed some money in the soldier’s care with the instruction that the child be bought and returned. The case was heard early that morning, and within an hour, the soldier returned on horseback, carrying the little child on his shoulder. When the woman saw her child, she fell to the ground, throwing dust over her face in relief.

The people who saw her, could not help but shed tears over her plight. She then raised her head towards the heavens and uttered some words which we could not understand. Her child was returned to her and she was escorted back to her camp.”¹



Şalāhuddīn Ayyūbī ﷺ, and many other Muslim army generals, were fearless in the battlefield, but extremely merciful when it came to fulfilling the rights of the weak and oppressed. Their opposition to the enemy did not blind them from dispensing justice, and their compassion melted the hearts of their enemies.²



Virtue of a Mother's Du'ā'

Salīm ibn Ayyūb ﷺ was an eminent scholar of his time. His childhood was spent in Ray³, where he learnt how to recite the Qur'ān under the guidance of scholars.

He narrates : A scholar once asked me to recite the Qur'ān and after much effort, I could not even recite Sūrah Fātiḥah. It was almost as though my tongue was tied.

The scholar then asked me, “Is your mother still alive?”

“Yes,” I replied.

1 The Life of Saladin, p 41; An-Nawādirus Sultāniyyah

2 Their behaviour, in reality, was based upon the golden advice given by Nabī ﷺ to his Sahābah: “In the Name of Allāh ﷺ, fight those who disobey Him. Do not act treacherously. Do not deceive the enemy. Do not mutilate dead bodies. Do not kill children.” (Şahīh Muslim) Similar instructions were issued to armies sent out by Abū Bakr ؓ and 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz ؓ. (Muwaṭṭa Imām Mālik)

3 Ray was a famous city of the ancient Persian Empire. It is near Tehran in modern-day Iran.

He advised, “Request her to make du‘ā’ for you. Allāh ﷺ will grant you true knowledge and the ability to recite the Qur’ān easily.”

I accepted his suggestion, and requested my mother to make du‘ā’ for me. She complied with my request. When I grew up, I desired to learn Arabic and proceeded to Baghdað, where I studied for some time. I then returned to Ray. I had just completed inscribing a copy of Mukhtṣar Al-Muzanī and was double-checking it with a friend, when the scholar, who had advised me to request du‘ās from my mother, entered. He greeted us, but did not recognise me. He sat and listened to our discourse, but could not understand anything.

In amazement, he asked, “Where have you learnt all of this from?”

I wanted to advise him to request his mother to make du‘ā’ for him, but out of shyness, I refrained.

Salīm ibn Ayyūb ﷺ taught and compiled many works in the field of jurisprudence, as well as a famous book of *Tafsīr*¹. Many benefited from his knowledge.

Ibn Subkī ﷺ says, “He was an exceptional scholar and none could surpass him. He became such an illustrious scholar, that only those erudite scholars, who were thoroughly grounded in knowledge and worship, could match him.”²



Fortunate are those who seek the pleasure of their parents and receive their du‘ās.



1 A commentary of the Qur’ān.

2 Siyar Aa'lām An-Nubalā', vol 17, p 645; Mukhtṣar Tārīkh Dimishq, Ṭabaqātush Shāfi'iyyah Al-Kubrā



A Righteous Servant Draws Rain

Muhammad ibn Munkadir رض says: Madīnah was once affected by a severe drought. The inhabitants went out to perform Ṣalāt Al-Istisqā¹, but there was no sign of rain. There was one particular pillar in the Masjid of Nabī ﷺ behind which I would sit and also perform Ṣalāh. One night, I performed 'Ishā' Ṣalāh and then reclined against the pillar as was my habit.

After a while, I noticed a black person, with a slightly yellowed face arriving. He had a cloth covering his legs and another covering his back. He proceeded towards the pillar in front of me and performed two rakāts of Ṣalāh. He then sat down and raised his hands in prayer, "O my Rab, those who frequent the Ḥaram of Your Nabī ﷺ went out to ask You for rain, but You did not cause it to rain! I beg You to grant them rain."

When I heard him say these words, I assumed that he was insane, but as soon as he dropped his hands, I heard the sound of thunder. When he heard the rain, he praised Allāh ﷻ in such glorious words, which I had never heard before. He then asked, "Who am I? What am I? Why was my prayer accepted? I have, however, expressed Your might and greatness."

He then stood up, placed his clothing over his body as before, and began performing Ṣalāh for the duration of the night. He then performed Fajr Ṣalāh in congregation, and I did likewise. After the Imām had completed the Ṣalāh, he stood up to leave and I followed him. When he reached the door of the Masjid, he raised his clothing and proceeded to wade through the water. I did the same, but he disappeared from my sight.

The next night, I again performed Ṣalāh and came to recline against the pillar. Again, the stranger arrived, drew his clothing like the night before, and continued to perform Ṣalāh till dawn. After we had performed Fajr in congregation, he rose to leave, and I followed him. This time, I

¹ A special Ṣalāh requesting for rain, which is performed during times of drought.

succeeded in keeping pace with him and noticed him entering a house in Madīnah, which was familiar to me. I returned to the Masjid. When the sun had risen and I had performed my Ṣalāh, I proceeded to the house of the pious stranger. The man was sitting and stitching a piece of leather. I realised that he was a cobbler by profession. When he saw me, he recognised me and asked, “Abū ‘Abdullāh, welcome! What can I do for you? Do you need a pair of leather socks to be sewn for yourself?”

I sat down and asked, “Are you not the same person whom I had seen last night?”

His expression changed and he exclaimed in anger, “Ibn Munkadir, what do you have to do with that?”

I noticed his irritation and said to myself, “I should leave him alone and depart immediately.”

That night, I performed my ‘Ishā’ and again came to my pillar, but the pious man did not arrive. I asked myself, “What have I done?”

After the sun had risen the next morning, I went to visit him at his home. The door was open, and the home was empty. The residents asked me, “Ibn Munkadir, what happened between you and him yesterday?”

I asked, “Why do you ask?”

They explained, “When you left him, he spread out his cloth, packed all his leather and tools therein, and left. We do not know where he has gone.”

I searched all the homes in Madīnah that I knew, but could find no trace of him. May Allāh ﷺ have mercy upon him!¹



Some of the pious servants of Allāh ﷺ prefer to maintain a low-profile in society. They fear that they may develop pride if their good deeds become known to others. They are often overlooked and sometimes even mocked at, but in the sight of Allāh ﷺ, they hold a very exalted status.



1. Ṣifatuṣ Ṣafwah, p 399



Qur'ān Taught in Secrecy in Russia

A ninety-five year old Muslim man from Russia explained how the 'Ulamā (Muslims scholars) of Russia taught the Qur'ān during the days of communism. He was twenty-five years of age when the execution and oppression of the Muslims commenced and he witnessed the entire period.

He explains : “We used to construct large homes with an open hall in the centre. On all sides of this hall, we would build sound-proof chambers. There was a secret door, leading out of the hall towards these chambers, where we would place a show-case displaying bottles of liquor. We would place portraits of Lenin and others, a television screen and other such obscene items close to the wall where the secret door was situated. Whenever the police arrived and searched the house, they would find nothing. They would notice the liquor bottles and assume that the residents' beliefs and ideologies were in conformity with their own. They would leave, satisfied, but deceived by what they had observed. Little did they realise, that just a few meters away from those bottles of liquor, were young innocent children reciting the Qur'ān. We would lock ourselves up in those chambers for six months at a time, teaching our young children how to recite the Qur'ān. The Ṣahīh Bukhārī was taught there as well. Beyond the confines of those chambers, the black winds of communism were blowing unabatedly, but within, the words of Allāh ﷺ and His Nabī ﷺ were being recited and memorised.”¹



May Allāh ﷺ reward the 'Ulamā of Islam for their supreme sacrifices and dedication in preserving the faith of the Muslims in areas of oppression

¹ Āzād Riyāsato Ke Chashm Dīda Ḥālāt, p 17

and injustice. Their invaluable contribution should inspire Muslims to remain dedicated to Islamic teachings during difficult times.



Repentance Draws Allāh's Mercy

During the time of Mūsa ﷺ, the Banī Isrā'īl were afflicted with a severe drought. Together, they begged Allāh ﷺ for rain, but to no avail. The heat became more intense and the skies remained cloudless.

Mūsa ﷺ then cried out to Allāh ﷺ, “O Allāh ﷺ, if my status means nothing to You then I beseech You by the grace of Muḥammad ﷺ to please grant us rain.”

Allāh ﷺ sent a revelation down to him: “Your status is noble in My sight, however, there is a person amongst you, who has disobeyed Me for forty years. It is because of him, that I am withholding the rains from you.”

Mūsa ﷺ stood up and addressed the congregation, “O sinner, who has disobeyed Allāh ﷺ for forty years, please leave this gathering.”

When the sinner heard the announcement, he thought to himself, “If I stand up in this gathering to leave, the entire Banī Isrā'īl will realise that I am the guilty one.” He lowered his head in shame and implored, “O my Allāh, I beg for Your forgiveness.”

Immediately the rain came down in torrents.

Mūsa ﷺ asked, “O Allāh, why did You send us rain?”

Allāh ﷺ replied, “Due to the sinner who has repented.”

Mūsa ﷺ asked, “O Allāh, will you please reveal his identity to me?”

Allāh ﷺ answered, “When I did not reveal his identity as a sinner, how can I now expose him when he has sincerely repented?”¹

¹ Nuzhatul Majālis, p 314



Sins are an impediment to the acceptance of du'ā', but Allāh ﷺ forgives and grants numerous bounties when man turns to Him in repentance.

The Qur'ān says,

اَسْتَغْفِرُوْ رَبِّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا يُرْسِلُ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا وَيُمْدِدُكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ
وَبَنْوَنَ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ أَهَارًا

“Seek forgiveness from your Lord. Verily, He is Most Forgiving. He will send rain to you in abundance. And He will increase you in wealth and children and bestow on you gardens and rivers.” (Sūrah Nūh, verse 10 - 12)

~

Allāh ﷺ conceals the sins of man out of His kindness.



Fearless before Dictators

A Man of His Word

Affān ibn Muslim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was a great scholar of Ḥadīth. Once, Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm called 'Affān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to question him regarding his belief pertaining to the Qur'ān being created or not. This was in conformity with the instruction of Ma'mūn, the Khalīph, who desired to know the view of 'Affān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ regarding the controversy raging at the time. On the arrival of 'Affān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, Ishāq read to him Ma'mūn's letter, which stated, “Question 'Affān and ask him to declare that the Qur'ān is created. If he agrees to do so, then you may leave him as he is. If he refuses to accept my view, then you should stop his salary.” 'Affān was being paid five-hundred dirhams every month by Ma'mūn.

After the letter had been read, Ishāq asked, “What do you say?” ‘Affān عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ replied by reciting a verse from the Qur’ān,

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

“Say He, Allāh, is One.”

and he completed the entire Sūrah. He then asked Ishāq, “Can the like of this ever be created?”

Ishāq replied, “The Amīrul-Mu’minīn has commanded that if you do not accept his view, he will stop your salary. If he does so, we will do likewise.”

‘Affān عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ responded by saying, “Allāh عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:

وَفِي السَّمَاوَاتِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ

“In the heavens is your sustenance and that which you have been promised.” (Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, verse 22)

Ishāq was left speechless and ‘Affān departed.¹

‘Affān عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ used to assist Judge Mu‘āz ibn Mu‘āz in investigating the credibility of witnesses. Once he was offered ten-thousand dinārs to remain silent regarding the integrity of a particular witness, but he refused, saying, “I cannot evade my responsibility to point out the truth.”²

Courageous in the Face of Fear

Once Khalīph Hishām ibn ‘Abdul Malik went to Makkah to perform Haj. He requested to meet a Ṣahābī, but was informed that all the Ṣahābah رض had passed on. He then requested to meet a Tābi‘ī, and Ṭā’ūs Al-Yamanī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was brought to him.

Ṭā’ūs عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ entered, removed his shoes and placed them on the edge of the royal carpet. He did not greet the Khalīph with the title of Amīrul-

1 Tahdhību Tahdhībil Kamāl Fī Asmā’ir Rijāl, vol 6, p 377

2 Tahdhību Tahdhībil Kamāl Fī Asmā’ir Rijāl, vol 6, p 375

Mu'minīn, but said, "Assalāmu 'Alaik, O Hishām." He then sat down by the side of the Khalīph, and without addressing him by his honorific title, asked, "How are you, Hishām?"

Hishām was outraged and was about to kill Ṭā'ūs ﷺ, but was informed, "You are in the sacred precincts of Allāh ﷺ and His Nabi ﷺ, where killing a person is not permitted."

Hishām asked, "Why have you done this?"

Ṭā'ūs ﷺ enquired, "What have I done?"

This reply angered Hishām even more, and he screamed, "Firstly, you removed your shoes and placed them on the edge of the royal carpet. Secondly, you did not kiss my hand. Thirdly, you did not greet me with the title of Amīrul-Mu'minīn. Fourthly, you did not address me by my honorific title. Fifthly, you sat by my side without my permission. And, finally, you asked, 'How are you, Hishām?'"

Ṭā'ūs ﷺ explained, "I do not see any problem with removing my shoes on the edge of your royal carpet because I also remove them before I face my Lord, five times a day, and He has never rebuked me nor become angry with me for doing so. Secondly, I did not kiss your hand because I heard Amīrul-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ say, 'It is not permitted for a man to kiss the hand of others, except that of his wife, out of love, and that of his son, out of mercy.' Thirdly, I did not greet you with the title of Amīrul-Mu'minīn because not everyone accepts you as a leader and I did not want to speak a lie. Fourthly, I did not address you by your honorific title because Allāh ﷺ addresses His prophets and close friends as 'O Yahyā, O 'Isā,' while he refers to His enemies by their titles, as in,

تَبَتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ

"Perish both the hands of Abū Lahab!" (Sūrah Al-Masad, verse 1)

Fifthly, I sat by your side because I heard Amīrul-Mu'minīn 'Alī ﷺ say, 'If you would like to see a man from amongst the inhabitants of the fire, then look towards him who sits while others stand.' "

When Hishām heard this, he was obliged to acknowledge his error, and sought advice from the learned man.

Tā'ūs ﷺ replied, "I heard Amīrul-Mu'minīn 'Alī ﷺ say, 'In Jahannam (hell) there will be serpents like pillars and scorpions like mules, which will sting every such ruler, who did not treat his subjects with justice.' " With these words, Tā'ūs ﷺ stood up and left.¹



One of the greatest forms of jihād is to speak the truth in the face of a tyrant, since it requires resilience and determination.



Sinful Father Saved from Eternal Punishment

A pious man narrates: In my neighbourhood, lived a man who was addicted to liquor. After he passed away, I prayed to Allāh ﷺ to show him to me in a dream. I saw him after six years, and he was dressed in green clothing.

I asked, "How did Allāh ﷺ deal with you?"

He replied, "When I passed away, I was dispatched to Jahannam (hell), where I was beaten with a whip made of fire, a thousand lashes for every sip of liquor I had taken. However, my wife was pregnant when I passed away, and she gave birth to a boy. When he began to speak and learnt to say

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

"*There is none worthy of worship besides Allāh,*"

Allāh ﷺ removed me from Jahannam. When the boy reached five, he began to learn at a Madrasah. The teacher taught him to recite

¹ Iḥyā' 'Ulūmuddīn, vol 2, p 146

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“In the Name of Allāh, Most gracious, Most merciful.”

When the boy recited it, Allāh ﷺ admitted me into Jannah (paradise), where I was given that which no eye has seen and no ear has heard.”¹



A deceased parent is rewarded by virtue of his offspring making du‘ā’ for him and doing good deeds in his name.



Two Exceedingly Honest Women

There was once a wealthy cloth merchant, who lived in Baghdađ. One day, a young woman came into his shop and requested to buy something. During the course of their discussion, she opened her veil, exposing her face. He was astounded by her beauty and remarked, “By Allāh, I am amazed at what I see.”

She explained, “I did not come to buy anything. I have been coming to the market for a number of days now, so that I could find a man who would be attracted to me and whom I could marry. You are that man. I am a wealthy woman. Will you marry me?”

The man explained, “I am married to a cousin from my father’s family and have promised her that I would not marry a second wife. I also have a son from her.”

The woman insisted, “If you marry me and visit me only twice a week, I will be satisfied.” He accepted her suggestion, married her and consummated the marriage.

¹ Az Zahrul Fā’ih Fī Dhikri Man Tanazzaha ‘Anidh Dhunūbi Wal Qabā’ih, p 46

He then went home to his first wife and said, "A friend of mine has asked me to spend the night at his house."

He left her and spent the night at the home of his second wife. He would then visit his second wife after Zuhr every day. This continued for a period of eight months, after which, his first wife began to suspect that something was amiss.

She instructed her slave-girl, "Follow him and observe where he goes."

The slave-girl followed him to his shop. At Zuhr time, she noticed him leaving. She followed him and saw him enter a house. She enquired from the neighbours and was informed that it belonged to a young woman, who was married to a cloth merchant. She returned to the home of her mistress and reported what she had seen.

The wife asked her not to inform anybody about what she had seen and she herself did not confront her husband about it either. An entire year elapsed in this way. He then fell ill and passed away. As he was wealthy, he left behind a huge sum of wealth, amounting to eight-thousand dinārs.

His first wife removed seven-thousand dinārs and kept them aside for their son. The remaining thousand dinārs, she divided into two portions. She kept half for herself and the other half she gave to her slave-girl, saying, "Take this to the other woman and inform her that her husband has died. He has left eight-thousand dinārs. Seven-thousand have been given to his son and the remaining thousand have been split between her and his first wife. Advise her to take it, as it is her rightful share from his estate."

The slave-girl proceeded as instructed. She knocked at the door and informed the woman of the death of her husband, and his estate. The woman cried, and then said, "Return to your mistress and inform her that my husband had divorced me prior to his death. I have a written document to confirm this. Take this wealth back to her, as I have no right to his estate."

The slave-girl returned and informed her mistress accordingly.¹

1 *Şifatus Şafwah*, p 516



To be honest at times when others are oblivious of the truth is a sign of piety and moral refinement.



Allāh ﷺ Assists a Sincere Debtor

Nabī ﷺ mentioned that a man from the Banī Isrā'il requested another man from his tribe to borrow him a thousand dinārs. The latter replied, “Bring me witnesses so that I can request their testimony when required.”

But the man answered, “Allāh ﷺ is sufficient as a witness.”

The man then requested for a surety, but he again replied, “Allāh ﷺ is sufficient as a surety.”

“You are correct,” the man replied and handed him the money which was to be repaid after a fixed period of time.

The man travelled by sea and completed what he had set out to do. He then searched for a ship to board, so that he could return and settle his debt at the appointed time, but could not find one. So he took a piece of wood, made a hole in it, placed therein a thousand dinārs with a note from him to the creditor and sealed the hole well. He then took the wood down to the sea and said, “O Allāh ﷺ, You are well-aware that I took a loan of a thousand dinārs from so-and-so person and he requested for witnesses and a surety. I replied that Allāh ﷺ was sufficient as a witness and surety. He was satisfied with You as a witness and surety. I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to find a ship to send him the money that is due to him, but my efforts have been in vain. Therefore, I hand this money over to Your care.” Saying this, he threw the piece of wood into the sea and watched it disappear into the distance. He then left, and continued searching for a ship to return to his country.

Meanwhile, the creditor went out, hoping to see a ship that would bring the money owed to him. As there was no ship coming in that day, he thought it best to go back home. As he was leaving, he picked up a large piece of driftwood from the shore, which he thought would serve as an excellent source of firewood. When he chopped up the wood, he found the money and the note sent by the debtor.

Some time later, the debtor returned, bringing with him another thousand dinārs. He explained, “By Allāh, I have tried my best to find a ship to return and bring your money, but could not find one until today.”

The creditor asked, “And did you send something to me?”

The man replied, “I have informed you that I could not find a ship before the one I arrived in.”

The creditor replied, “Allāh ﷺ has delivered that which you had sent in the piece of wood, on your behalf. You may keep your thousand dinārs and return rightly-guided.”¹



A man’s eagerness and sincerity to pay off his debt timeously, ensures that Allāh ﷺ directs the money to its rightful owner.



Allāh ﷺ assists those who have trust in Him. Allāh ﷺ says:

وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسِيبٌ

“And he who places his trust in Allāh, He is sufficient for him.”
(Sūrah At-Talāq, verse 3)



¹ Bukhārī



Hijāb in Times of Tribulation

Khallād ﷺ was martyred during the battle of Quraiza. His mother, Ummī Khallād بنت خالد, came to Nabī ﷺ to enquire about him. She was dressed with a *niqāb* (veil) concealing her face.

Some of the companions asked her, “Your son has been killed in the battle and yet you have come with your face covered.”

She replied, “I may have lost my son, but I have not lost my *hayā'* (shame and modesty).”¹



Honoured are those Muslims who remain focused on Islamic teachings when others become unsettled due to stressful circumstances and adverse conditions.



A Bridle from My Braids

During the time of Hārūn Ar-Rashīd, the Romans took a number of Muslim women as captives and news of this reached him. Mānṣūr ibn ‘Ammār مانصور بن عمّار was promptly advised to utilise the court of Hārūn Ar-Rashīd and encourage the Muslims to fight in the path of Allāh ﷺ and release the captives. He agreed, and while encouraging them, a sealed package was thrown towards him to which was attached the following

¹ Sunan Abū Dāwūd; Tabaqāt Al-Kubrā

note, “I am an Arab woman. I have received news of the capture of the Muslim women by the Romans, and heard you encouraging people to fight in the path of Allāh ﷺ. I hereby present to you the most honourable part of my body - my braids. I have cut my long hair and placed it in this sealed package. I ask you in the Name of Allāh, the Great, to make them into a bridle for a horse that will be used in the path of Allāh ﷺ. Perhaps Allāh, the Great, will take pity on my condition and shower His mercy upon me due to this action of mine.”¹

When Mansūr رض heard this, he began to cry and so did those who had gathered. Hārūn Ar-Rashīd commanded that the army depart with urgency, and he too joined the expedition. Allāh ﷺ granted the army victory.²



Sincere concern and commitment towards the well-being of others motivates a person to incredible forms of sacrifice.



The Repentant One is Exalted

There was once a butcher, who was infatuated with a young slave-girl who lived in his neighbourhood. Her master sent her on an errand to another village and the butcher decided to follow her with the intention of seducing her. When he appeared before her, she

1 It has to be pointed out that her action of clipping and presenting her hair was incorrect from an Islamic perspective as it is not permissible for strange men to view or touch the body parts of a strange woman. Her sincerity and concern, however, deserve respect and praise.

2 Ṣifatūṣ Ṣafwah, p 801

exclaimed, “I beg you to stop! I love you more than you love me, but I fear Allāh ﷺ.”

When he heard this, he replied, “It cannot be that you fear Allāh ﷺ and I do not.” He turned away repentantly.

On his way, he was overtaken by thirst, to such an extent, that he was on the verge of dying. A prophet from the Banī Isrā’īl noticed him and asked what the problem was. He replied that he was dying of thirst.

The prophet advised, “Come, let us pray to Allāh ﷺ to send a cloud that will shade us until we reach the village.”

But the butcher replied, “I have no good deeds to my credit by virtue of which I can pray. I suggest you offer that prayer.”

The prophet answered, “Fine. I will pray and you should say *āmīn* to my prayer.” They did as agreed, and immediately a cloud appeared, casting its shadow over them, until they reached the village. The butcher then turned towards his home, and amazingly, the cloud followed him.

The prophet was surprised, and asked, “You claimed that you had done no good and that I should pray while you would say *āmīn* to my prayer. The cloud followed us and gave us shelter from the sun and it eventually followed you. Please inform me who you really are?”

Accordingly, the butcher explained to the prophet what had happened between him and the slave-girl.

Upon hearing his story, the prophet exclaimed, “A repentant person enjoys a rank with Allāh ﷺ that is unmatched by others.”¹



Repentance elevates the rank of a person and draws Allāh’s ﷺ special mercy.



¹ *Hilyatul Awliyā'*, p 230; *Iḥyā' 'Ulūmuddīn*



An Arch-enemy Accepts Islam

Nabī ﷺ sent an army to Najd, and they returned with a prisoner by the name of Thumāmah ibn Uthāl. They tied him to a pillar in the Masjid. Nabī ﷺ approached him and asked, “What are your thoughts, O Thumāmah?”

He replied, “I have good thoughts, O Muḥammad. If you kill me, you would be killing a person whose blood could rightfully be taken, and if you set me free, you would be doing a favour to one who would be grateful. If you desire wealth then ask!”

Nabī ﷺ left him alone. The next day, Nabī ﷺ again asked, “What are your thoughts, O Thumāmah?”

Thumāmah replied, “My thoughts are as I had mentioned to you previously. If you set me free, you would be doing a favour to one who would be grateful.”

Nabī ﷺ left him alone for another day. On the third day, Nabī ﷺ again asked, “What are your thoughts, O Thumāmah?”

Thumāmah replied, “My thoughts are as I had mentioned previously.”

Nabī ﷺ then instructed, “Release Thumāmah!”

Thumāmah proceeded to a date-palm tree close to the Masjid, took a ghusl and then entered the Masjid, saying, “I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh ﷺ, and I testify that Muḥammad ﷺ is His Prophet! O Muḥammad ﷺ, by Allāh, no face on the surface of the earth did I hate more than yours, but yours is now the most beloved to me. By Allāh, no religion was more detested by me than yours, but it is now the most beloved to me. By Allāh, no city was more hated by me than yours, but it is now the most beloved of cities to me. Your army arrested me at a time when I was intending to perform ‘Umrah. What do you think I should do?”

Nabī ﷺ gave him glad tidings and advised him to proceed for 'Umrah.

When he arrived in Makkah, a person asked, "Have you become a Sabian?"

Thumāmah replied, "No, I have embraced Islam and joined Muḥammad ﷺ. By Allāh, not a single grain of wheat will come to you from Yamāmah unless Nabī ﷺ gives me permission to dispatch it to you."¹

Accordingly, he did not allow any provisions to be sent to Makkah. Finally, the Quraish were constrained to write to Nabī ﷺ, beseeching him, in the name of their kinship with him, to instruct Thumāmah to send food to them, and Nabī ﷺ obliged.²



The beautiful social, moral and spiritual teachings of Islam are sufficient to melt the hearts of the most merciless of enemies.



An Evil Plot Rebounds on the Perpetrator

Aḥmad ibn Tūlūn once found a young abandoned baby boy. He picked him up, brought him home and saw to his upbringing. He named the boy Aḥmad and people began calling him Aḥmad *Al-Yatīm* (the orphan). When he grew up, he turned out to be very intelligent and good-looking. Aḥmad ibn Tūlūn continued to teach and rear the young boy carefully, hence he became well-educated and cultured. When he was on his death bed, he advised his son, Abul Jaish, to continue taking care of Aḥmad.

¹ Bukhārī

² As-Sīratun Nabawiyah, vol 3, p 492

After his death, Abul Jaish, accordingly, summoned Aḥmad and said, “I will be seeing to your needs from now on, and it is my habit to take an oath from those who are in my service that they will never deceive me.”

He then entrusted Aḥmad with his wealth and promoted him to a position where he had to deal with important matters of the state. Aḥmad proved himself to be more than competent. Over time, Abul Jaish noticed his sincerity in service and counsel and became quite close to him. He began having confidence in Aḥmad and entrusted him with his private matters.

One day, he said to Aḥmad, “Go to a so-and-so room of mine. At the place where I normally sit, you will find a *tasbīh*¹ made of jewels. Bring it to me!”

Aḥmad did as he was instructed. As he entered the room, he saw a slave-girl of Abul Jaish with a male servant who was very close to him. When they saw Aḥmad entering, the young man left. The slave-girl then offered herself to Aḥmad so that he could fulfil his desires with her.

Aḥmad refused, saying, “I can never betray my master. He has been so kind to me and has taken an oath of allegiance from me.” He ignored her request and proceeded with the *tasbīh* to Abul Jaish. After he had left, the slave-girl became anxious and feared that he might relate to Abul Jaish what he had seen.

Days passed, but she found no hint of anger in her master towards her. However, by pure coincidence, he purchased another slave-girl who stole his heart and time. He was completely overawed by her splendid beauty and her graceful manners. He showered her with gifts and spoke of nobody else but her. Initially, his attention was focused towards the wretched slave-girl who had deceived him, but things were different now. The deceitful slave girl had a domineering nature and could not accept his disregard for her. She attributed this to Aḥmad, who she suspected of having informed her master about her.

She approached Abul Jaish, pretending to be deeply distressed and in tears, so that her plot would gain credibility. She cried out, “Aḥmad Al-Yateem has attempted to seduce me.”

1 A string of beads used as a counter to praise and remember Allāh ﷺ.

When Abul Jaish heard this, he was infuriated and decided to kill Ahmād, without further delay. However, he soon regained his composure and decided to proceed carefully with his plan. He summoned a trustworthy servant of his and instructed, "I will send a man to you with a golden tray who will convey a request to you from me to fill the dish with musk. When he reaches you, kill him, place his head in the tray, cover it and present it before me."

He then proceeded to his private chamber. Ahmād came along with no knowledge of the plot that was hatched against him. He then addressed Ahmād, "Take this gold dish and go to so-and-so. Tell him that I have instructed him to fill it with musk."

Ahmād proceeded as he had been commanded. Enroute, he came across a group of his close friends, who asked him to join them. Ahmād replied, "I cannot, as I am fulfilling a request of Abul Jaish."

They replied, "Send somebody to fetch the musk and when he has brought it, you can take it to him."

Ahmād looked around to see who he could send. His gaze fell on the young man whom he had seen with the slave-girl. Ahmād gave him the dish and said, "Take this gold dish and go to so-and-so. Tell him that Abul Jaish has instructed him to fill it with musk."

The servant proceeded and made the request. The trusted servant accordingly killed him and placed his head in the dish. He then covered it and presented it to Ahmād, who in turn brought it to his master in total innocence. When he opened the dish and saw the head, he was perplexed and asked Ahmād what had happened. Ahmād explained that he had deputed the servant to take the dish after his friends had asked him to join them. He insisted that he knew no more than this.

Abul Jaish asked, "Do you perhaps know something about this servant, that has led to his death?"

Ahmād replied, "He has earned what he deserved because of his deception. I did not want to disclose it, but I am now constrained to do so." He then related to Abul Jaish all that he had seen between the male servant and the slave-girl when he had gone to fetch the *tasbīh*. The slave-girl was summoned. She confessed to the truth of Ahmād's story and was

accordingly killed. The incident increased Aḥmad's status and respect in the sight of Abul Jaish, who showered more favours upon him.¹



Allāh ﷺ often punishes the perpetrators of an evil plot by means of their own planning.



When a master is pleased with his loyal slave, it can be well-imagined how much more pleased Allāh ﷺ is with His faithful servant.



Lesson in Humility

Abbās ﷺ had a gutter emerging from his house which was on the path ‘Umar ﷺ would walk by. Once, ‘Umar ﷺ was proceeding for Jumu‘ah (Friday) Ṣalāh in a set of clean clothing, while two birds were being slaughtered for ‘Abbās ﷺ. As he walked by, some water mixed with blood from the slaughtered birds splashed onto his clothing. ‘Umar ﷺ ordered that the gutter be removed, and returned home to wear another set of clothing. He then returned to the Masjid and performed the Ṣalāh.

‘Abbās ﷺ then approached him, and said, “That gutter was placed there by Nabī ﷺ himself.”

‘Umar ﷺ realised his error, and replied, “I take an oath to you that you will climb on my back and replace the gutter to the position where Nabī ﷺ had placed it.” His oath was fulfilled, accordingly.²

1 Al-Mustatraf Fī Kulli Fannim Mustaẓraf, vol 1, p 205

2 Musnad Aḥmad



The Ṣaḥābah ﷺ unhesitatingly accepted their errors of judgement when pointed out to them. They did not attempt to justify themselves through unnecessary argumentation.



Respect for Islamic Symbols

Mocking at Ḥadīth

Abū Dāwūd As-Sajistānī رض narrates : A shameless man would frequent the gatherings of the students of Ḥadīth. One day, he heard a Ḥadīth of Nabī ﷺ which states, “The angels lower their wings for the seeker of knowledge out of pleasure for his good deeds.”

He mockingly placed some iron nails beneath his feet and remarked, “I want to tread upon the wings of angels!” As a result of this, he developed gangrene on his feet.¹

Abū Yaḥyā As-Sājī narrates : We were walking through the alleys of Baṣrah on our way to visit the scholars of Ḥadīth, and I quickened my stride. A man from the area, who was notorious for his shamelessness, saw us and mockingly remarked, “Raise your feet above the wings of the angels so as not to tear them apart!” Immediately, his feet became paralysed and he fell to the ground.²

Repentance of Bishr Al-Ḥāfi رض

Bishr Al-Ḥāfi رض was a thief. As he was walking, one day, he noticed a piece of paper with the words

¹ Bustānul 'Ārifin, p 125

² Tārīkhul Islam Dha-habī, vol 52, p 319; Bustānul 'Ārifin, p 125

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

on the ground close to the public bath. He was quite disturbed at this and raised his gaze to the heavens, saying, “My Master, Your Name has been cast aside.”

He picked up the paper and cleaned it. He then proceeded to a perfume store and purchased some musk and rose-water with the single dirham he possessed. He applied it to the paper and placed it respectfully in a crevice of a wall. He then proceeded to visit a friend who he often spent time with.

His friend said to him, “By Allāh, my brother, last night I saw you in a beautiful dream, the like of which I had never seen before. I will not relate it to you, unless you inform me of that special action you had carried out yesterday, which is known to you and Allāh ﷺ only.”

Bishr بِشْر answered, “I do not recall anything in particular, except that I was passing the public bath and found a paper on the ground,” and he recounted the incident to him.

His friend continued, “In my dream, I saw a person instructing me to inform you: You raised Our Name in honour. We will honour your name in this world and the Hereafter.”¹



Islam is a religion of respect and etiquette.



¹ Tārīkh Dimishq, vol 10, p181



Advice of a Pious Son

Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz ﷺ had been entrusted with the position of Khalīph of the Muslims. After his appointment, he arrived home to have a brief rest. As he was about to lie down, his son, 'Abdul Malik, approached him and asked, "O Amīrul-Mu'minīn, what are you doing?"

'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz ﷺ replied, "My son, I would like to take a midday nap for a short while."

The son asked, "How can you take a nap when you have not yet corrected the injustices of the past?"

'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz ﷺ replied, "My son, I have not had any sleep since yesterday, due to my involvement in the matters of your uncle, Sulaimān. Once I have performed Zuhra Salāh, I will attend to those injustices."

The son asked, "Who can guarantee that you will live until Zuhra Salāh?"

'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz ﷺ said, "Come to me, my son!"

When his son drew close to him, he embraced him, kissed him on his forehead and said, "Praise be to Allāh ﷺ Who has brought forth a person from my progeny who assists me in my religious matters."

He did not sleep, but went out and had an announcement made for all those who had been wronged in any way to bring their disputes to him.¹



Observations and remarks of children should not be shrugged off. Very often, their innocence and sincerity expose the truth.



¹ Ṣifatūṣ Ṣafwah, p 334

Pious and upright children are an invaluable blessing to parents.

Righteous individuals are produced from homes where Ṣalāh, Qur’ān and good character constitute the core of life. Homes dominated by television, chat-lines, un-Islamic literature and music, produce individuals whose minds are focused on materialism rather than spirituality.



Allāh ﷺ Conceals a Sinner

A pious person narrates: I saw a young man frequently reciting the words, “O Eternal Being, Your kindness is also eternal.”

One day, I asked him, “Why do you recite these words so often?”

He answered, “I do so because of a strange incident that changed my life. When I was younger, I would attend weddings and functions frequented by females. I would dress as a woman and draw a veil over my face so that they would not identify my gender. In this way, I would join in their functions and sit amongst them. One day, there was a wedding function in the home of the ruler. I attended as usual. Incidentally, a piece of valuable jewellery was stolen and the ruler instructed that all the women be searched.

Accordingly, they were instructed to remove their veils. When this happened, I began to recite these words, ‘O Eternal Being, your kindness is also eternal.’ I also took a pledge to Allāh ﷺ that if He concealed my identity, I would never attend female functions again. As they were about to search me, it was announced that the remaining women should be left alone, as the jewellery had been recovered. That day, I repented to Allāh ﷺ and promised never to revert to such a sin again.”¹

¹ Nuzhatul Majālis, p 116; Az Zahrul Fā’ih Fī Dhikri Man Tanazzaha ‘Anidh Dhunūbi Wal Qabā’ih



Allāh ﷺ conceals sins through His mercy.



An Educated Woman is Irreplaceable

The mother of Zainuddīn was a pious woman. She was a *hāfiẓah*¹ of the Qur'ān and well-educated with regard to its commentary.

Her father, son and brother were also highly recognised scholars of their time. Her son benefited enormously from her du'ās. She had memorised *Al-Jawāhir*, a thirty volume commentary of the Qur'ān, compiled by her father, Abul Faraj رض. Her son has narrated an incident which aptly displays her academic brilliance.

He says: We used to learn the commentary of the Qur'ān from my uncle. One day, I arrived home and my mother asked me, "What has my brother taught you today?"

I explained the Sūrah that he had taught us.

Then, taking the name of a particular scholar, she asked, "Did he explain to you the views of so-and-so scholar?"

"No," I replied.

She replied, "Perhaps he has forgotten to do so."²



Pious, knowledgeable and intelligent women are the moral fibre of good Muslim homes.



¹ A female who memorised the Qur'ān.

² *Adh-Dhail 'Alā Ṭabaqātil Ḥanābilah*, vol 3, p 536



Repentance from the Lap of Luxury

Abdullāh ibn Mu‘allim says: We left Madīnah to perform Ḥaj. Enroute, I met a man from the tribe of Banū Hāshim and the clan of Banū ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib. He had abandoned the pleasures of the world and was focused completely upon the life of the Hereafter. As we walked along, I drew close to him and suggested, “I have an extra conveyance. Would you not like to join me?”

He thanked me, saying, “That would assist me greatly.” We proceeded and he began to speak to me in friendly terms.

He explained, “I used to stay in Baṣrah, where I lived a life of pride, extravagance and pomp. One day, I instructed my servant to prepare a soft silky bed with a pillow filled with scattered rose petals. He did as I had instructed. As I laid down, a thorn which the servant had forgotten to remove, pricked me. I stood up and struck him hard. I then returned to my bed, disposed of the thorn from the pillow, and fell asleep. In my dream, I saw a vicious-looking person shaking me, saying, “Awake from your slumber and stupor! He then recited the following verses:

يَا خَلِ إِنكَ إِنْ تَوَسِّدْ لِيْنَا وَسَدْتْ بَعْدَ الْيَوْمِ صَمَ الْجَنَدْلِ

فَامْهَدْ لِنَفْسِكَ صَالِحًا تَسْعَدْ بِهِ فَلَتَنْدَمْ غَدَّا إِذَا لَمْ تَفْعَلْ

*O my friend, you are resting upon a soft bed
Tomorrow you will have to lie upon hard stones.
Prepare good deeds so that you will be pleased
Or else tomorrow you will be saddened if you fail to prepare.”*

I awoke with a fright and immediately turned in repentance to Allāh ﷺ.”¹



Intelligent is that person who recognises and heeds the call of guidance.



Dedication to Knowledge

Imām Muslim مالک, the compiler of the famous book *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, once attended a gathering of knowledge where a Ḥadīth, which he did not recognise, was mentioned. He returned home, lit his lamp and advised his family members that he did not want to be disturbed.

It was said to him, “Somebody has sent us a basket of dates as a gift.”

He requested that the dates be brought to him.

He commenced eating from the dates and concurrently began to search for the Ḥadīth that he had heard.

This continued the entire night, until all the dates were depleted. It was already morning, when he found the Ḥadīth. He was so focused upon searching for the Ḥadīth, that he did not realise how many dates he had consumed and this led to his demise.²



True Islamic knowledge has a special sweetness and beauty which fascinates and inspires the seeker of truth.



¹ Al-Muṣṭaṭraf Fī Kulli Fannim Mustaṭraf, vol 2, p 294

² Siyar Aa'lām An-Nubalā', vol 12, p 564; Tārīkh Baghdađ



Woman's Chastity Draws Divine Mercy

Once the city of Delhi was afflicted by a severe drought. All the 'Ulamā of the area gathered in an open field to pray to Allāh ﷺ for rain. Many men, women and children accompanied them, and their animals were taken along as well. From the early morning until 'Asr, they stood out in the burning sun and prayed, "O Allāh ﷺ, we are in a drought, please send us rain through Your mercy." But, there was no sign of rain.

A young man was passing by and saw the huge gathering. He stopped his conveyance and asked, "Why have you people gathered here?"

They replied, "We have been here from early morning, praying for rain. We have cried and begged Allāh ﷺ. Even the little children have been calling out in desperation. The entire day has passed like this, but, the mercy of Allāh ﷺ has not descended upon us."

The young man remarked, "I see. Allow me a few minutes to pray to Allāh ﷺ as well." He proceeded to his conveyance, where he began to pray. Immediately, the clouds gathered and it began to rain. The 'Ulamā were astounded and hastened towards him to find out who he was. He was undoubtedly a *mustajābut da'wāt*.¹

They asked the young man, "Please advise what prayer you made."

The young man replied, "My mother is seated on this conveyance. She is such a pure and chaste woman, that no strange man has ever seen her and vice versa. I took hold of a corner of her garment and prayed to Allāh ﷺ, 'O Allāh, I am the son of this pure woman. If her chastity holds any status in your sight, please send down the rains to your servants.' Due to this, Allāh ﷺ sent down the rains."²

1 A person whose prayers are readily accepted by Allāh ﷺ.

2 Khawātīn Islam Ke Īmān Afroz Wāqi'āt, p 160



Allāh ﷺ readily accepts the du‘ās of those who obey Him.



Wise Advice of a Brave Mother

Zarūnah زرنه, was the mother of Aḥmad Shah ‘Abdālī, the Muslim leader of Afghanistan. She was a woman of great piety and fortitude. When the Marathas began to broaden their empire in India, the news reached Kandahar, upon which Aḥmad Shah Abdālī convened an urgent meeting. It was decided that a strong fort be built in Kandahar to oppose the advancing Maratha army. The meeting was still in progress, when Aḥmad Shah ‘Abdālī received a message asking him to proceed to his home. He immediately left the meeting. As he entered his home, he was confronted by his mother, who was visibly angry. She saw him and turned away displaying her displeasure. Aḥmad Shah was taken aback and asked, “Mother, is everything well? Are you angry with me for any reason?”

His mother replied, “I wish I had never given birth to a son like you! I wish I had not breast-fed you! Did I raise you to witness the day when you are considering building a fort in Kandahar so that you may hide from the Marathas? It would be more appropriate for you to march to India to break the backbone of the Marathas and then return home.”

Aḥmad lowered his head, and replied, “Mother, I beg your forgiveness. I will fulfil your request, Inshā-Allāh.”

Thereafter, he marched out with his army to India, where he fought a number of battles with the Marathas. In the decisive battle of Panipat,

he crushed the power of the Marathas to such an extent that they never rose up again.¹



Many valiant Muslim commanders and generals received guiding inspiration from their courageous mothers.



A Woman's Poetic Genius

An Iranian prince once composed a verse of poetry:

در ابلق کے کم دیده موجود
“A black and white pearl is rare indeed.”

He tried his best to add a second verse to this, but failed. He requested a number of other poets to assist, but none of them succeeded. In desperation, he wrote to the king of Delhi, requesting for a second verse to be sent to him. The poets of Delhi were also unsuccessful. Zaibunnisā Makhfī, the daughter of Ālamgīr Aurangzeb, was one day applying antimony and a teardrop fell from her eyes. Immediately she composed the second verse:

در ابلق کے کم دیده موجود
مگر اشک بتان سرمه اللود
“A black and white pearl is rare indeed.”

Except in the surma-mingled teardrop that falls from the eyes of the beloved.”

¹ Khawātīn-e Islam ke Īmān Afroz Wāqi'āt, p 133

The king sent the verses to the Iranian prince. After reading them, he requested that the poet be sent to him. Zaibunnisā wrote back with her answer in poetic verses :

در سخن مخفی منم چون بونه گل در برگ گل
برگه دیدن میل وارد در سخن بیند مرا

“As the fragrance is concealed in the petals, I am concealed in my words.

Whosoever desires to see me should read my verses.”¹



A righteous and intelligent woman realises that her beauty is not to be subjected to the lustful glances of all and sundry.



Muslim Women in Battle

Muslim women showed amazing courage during the battle of Maisān. Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah ﷺ, the commander of the Muslim army, had left the women behind and proceeded to engage the inhabitants of Maisān on the banks of the Tigris. In the midst of combat, Ardah bint Al-Hārith رضي الله عنها, decided to assist the Muslim army and remarked, “If we can reach the Muslim army, we will join them in the battle.”

Saying this, she tied her veil in the form of a banner and so did the other women. Holding their veils above their heads, they marched forward. The two armies were in the thick of the battle when the women reached them. The enemy saw the banners and mistakenly thought

¹ Khawātīnē Islam Ke Īmān Afroz Wāqī'āt, p 230

that reinforcements had arrived to assist the Muslims. They retreated, allowing the Muslims to attack and overpower them.¹



Since the era of Nabī ﷺ, Muslim women displayed remarkable courage in the battlefield.



Love for Knowledge

Dedication to Learning

Imām Abū Yūsuf رض mentioned, “My son passed away, but I did not stop attending the classes of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رض. Instead, I instructed an acquaintance to handle the funeral and burial matters so that I would not be deprived of a day in his company.”²

Quest for Literature

During the Muslim rule of Andalus, Qurṭubah was known for its books and libraries. People would take exceptional care in acquiring knowledge, books and manuscripts. Books were regarded as a treasure and the mere ownership of a library was considered a mark of honour and prestige. Men would compete in acquiring books that were rare or written by a particular calligrapher.

A man from Ḥadhrāmaut says: I was once in Qurṭubah and urgently required a particular book. I searched all the book markets and finally found a copy of it. It was written in an attractive script and its commentary was good. I was overjoyed. As the book was being auctioned, I began to

1 Tārīkh At-Ṭabarī, vol 4, p 422

2 Al-Mustaṭraf Fī Kulli Fannim Mustaṭraf, vol 1, p 22

bid for it, only to find that another person was bidding at a higher price than mine each time. The price of the book finally rose above its actual value.

I decided to ask the auctioneer, “Please inform me which person is prepared to pay so much for this book?”

He pointed out to me a man who was dressed in state garb. I approached him, and remarked, “It appears as if you are a great scholar. May Allāh ﷺ increase your honour. If you require this book urgently, I will stop bidding and allow you to buy it. It has already reached far more than its actual value.”

The man answered, “I am not a scholar, in fact, I do not even know what this book contains. The reality of the matter is that I have been acquiring books so that my collection would be regarded as one of the most outstanding ones in the city. There is an empty space in one of the shelves and this book will fill the space perfectly. I particularly liked it because of its fine script and excellent cover and binding. I am prepared to pay any price to acquire it. By the grace of Allāh ﷺ, I have the wealth to do so.”

The man’s words angered and prompted me to respond, “It is amazing that a man like you has enough money to buy a book which you do not require, whereas a man like me, who knows what it contains and can truly benefit therefrom, has little money to buy it. An almond has been given to one without teeth.”¹



Cultured is that nation which regards sound knowledge as a mark of distinction.



¹ Nafhūt Tīb Min Ghuṣnīl Andalus Ar-Raṭīb, p 463



True Love for Nabi ﷺ

Touched by the Winds of Madīnah

Moulānā Rashīd Ahmād Gāngohī ﷺ was a great scholar of his time. Once, a person who had returned from Ḥajj, presented him with a gift of clothing from the blessed lands. When Moulānā received it, he kissed it with a great deal of respect and placed it over his body.

Students who were sitting in his company remarked in amazement, “This clothing is not from Madīnah. It is manufactured in another country and then bought by traders in Madīnah, who then resell it to those who visit the city!”

Moulānā replied, “I do realise that it is not manufactured in Madīnah. However, I am honouring it, because it has been touched by the winds of Madīnah.”¹

Confined for Three Days

Moulānā Qāsim Nānotwī ﷺ had a great deal of love for the Sunnah of Nabi ﷺ. Once, the British issued a warrant for his arrest. He remained confined within his home for three days, after which he emerged, saying, “Nabi ﷺ hid in the cave for three days only and I would not like to remain in hiding for longer than this time period. I do not want to perform an action that is contrary to the Sunnah.”²

Conflict of Colours

One day, a person came to meet Moulānā Qāsim Nānotwī ﷺ and gave him a pair of green shoes as a gift. Moulānā accepted the gift but did not wear it. After a number of days, he was asked, “The shoes were a

1 Ahle Dil Ke Tarpādene Wāle Wāqiāt, p 122

2 Ahle Dil Ke Tarpādene Wāle Wāqiāt, p 120

splendid gift. They were very finely made and are commonly worn in the neighbourhood. Why do you not wear them?"

Moulānā replied, "I accepted the gift so that the man would not be disappointed. However, I have not worn them because the thought came to mind that the blessed grave of my master, Nabī ﷺ, is also green in colour. I cannot wear a pair of shoes of the same colour."¹

Bare-footed in Madīnah

Moulānā Qāsim Nānotwī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would walk around bare-footed in the streets of Madīnah, causing his feet to bleed. When questioned why he did not wear shoes, he replied, "I would have worn shoes but my heart could not accept the idea of them trampling over the sand where Nabī ﷺ had walked."²



A person who has sincere love for Nabī ﷺ finds pleasure in the most difficult of actions. An Arabic proverb explains this eloquently :

حب الشيء أعمى و يصم

"Love for something makes one blind and deaf."



Sublime Conduct Softens Hearts

Hasan Al-Baṣrī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had a Christian neighbour who had a toilet on the top of his house. Urine used to seep through from the toilet into the house of Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, who ordered that

1 Ahle Dil Ke Tarpādene Wāle Wāqiāt, p 122

2 Ahle Dil Ke Tarpādene Wāle Wāqiāt, p 122

a container be placed beneath that area so that the drops would fall therein. At night, he would dispose of the contents. Twenty years passed in this way.

One day, he was ill and his Christian neighbour came to visit him. When he noticed what was going on, he asked, "How long have you been patiently bearing my filth?"

Ḩasan Al-Başrī رض replied, "Twenty years."

On hearing this, he removed his traditional Christian garment and immediately accepted Islam.¹



The sublime conduct taught by Islam has the power to touch the lives of disbelievers and attract them towards Islam.



Forgiving an Employee

A slave-girl was once pouring water for 'Alī ibn Ḥusain رض so that he could perform wudhū and prepare for Ṣalāh. Accidentally, the vessel fell from her hand onto the face of 'Alī, causing it to bleed. As 'Alī رض raised his head towards her, she uttered, "Allāh عز says,

وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ

Those who suppress their anger."

When he heard this, he said, "I have suppressed my anger."

She then recited the next part of the verse,

¹ Al-Imtā' Wal Mu'ānasah, vol 2, p 129

وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ

“Those who forgive people.”

He again replied, “May Allāh ﷺ forgive you!”

She then recited the final part of the verse,

وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“And Allāh ﷺ loves those who do good.”

(Sūrah Al-‘Imrān, verse 134)

He replied, “Go! I have freed you.”¹



Overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of one’s employees is a prophetic teaching which earns great rewards.



Sincerity is the Basis of Virtue

Anonymous Stranger Settles Debt

Abdullāh ibn Mubārak رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ often travelled to the city of Raqqah². A young man would frequent his gatherings of Ḥadīth and carry out certain errands for him. On one occasion, he arrived in the city and noticed that the young man was absent. Upon enquiring, he learnt that he had been imprisoned for a loan that he could not settle.

‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked, “How much does he owe?”

1 Tārīkh Dimishq, vol 41, p 387

2 A city in Syria.

“Ten-thousand dirhams,” he was informed.

‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ﷺ then went out in search of the creditor and paid him the ten-thousand dirhams. He also took an oath from the creditor that he would not disclose to anybody about the settlement of the debt as long as he, ‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ﷺ, was alive.

‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ﷺ then left with an undertaking from the creditor, that he would secure the release of the young man the next morning. When the young man was released, he was informed, “‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ﷺ, was here and enquired about you, but he has already left the city.”

The young man set out in search of the scholar and caught up with him after a few days. When ‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ﷺ saw him, he asked, “Young man, where have you been? I did not see you in the city.”

He replied, “Yes, I was imprisoned because of a debt I could not settle.”

‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ﷺ asked, “Then how were you released?”

He replied, “A stranger settled my debt.”

‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ﷺ then advised the young man, “Praise Allāh ﷺ for His kindness upon you for settling your debt.”

Only after his demise, did the truth of the matter become known to others.¹

In the Battlefield

Abdullāh ibn Sinān narrates : I was with ‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ﷺ, and Mu’tamir ibn Sulaimān ﷺ, when an announcement was made for the Muslims to proceed to the battlefield. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ﷺ set out with the Muslim army.

When the armies met, face to face, a Roman soldier advanced and challenged the Muslims to a single combat. A Muslim soldier went out to fight him, but was killed. Another Muslim soldier went out to face him, but met the same fate. In this manner, the Roman killed six Muslim soldiers. He then began moving amongst the ranks arrogantly, challenging the Muslims. For a while, nobody dared to face him. Suddenly, ‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ﷺ turned to me and instructed me to handle some specific

¹ Tārīkh Dimishq, vol 32, p 455

matter, if he was killed. He then went out to challenge the Roman soldier.

The contest was fierce but the Roman soldier was finally killed. 'Abdullāh ibn Mubārak رض then challenged the Romans to a single combat. One of them came forward and was killed. In this way, 'Abdullāh ibn Mubārak رض killed six enemy soldiers. After this, no enemy soldier dared face him. 'Abdullāh ibn Mubārak رض then returned and vanished into the Muslim ranks. After a while, I noticed him standing by my side, and he said, "O 'Abdullāh, do not relate what you have just witnessed to anyone as long as I am alive."¹

A Sincere Author

Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb Abul Ḥasan Al-Māwardī رض was a prolific writer from Baṣrah. His works include a commentary of the Qur'ān, entitled, *An-Nuqat Wal 'Uyūn*, a twenty-volume treatise on Fiqh, entitled, *Al-Ḥāwī*, and the famous work, *Aḥkāmus Sultāniyyah*, amongst others. He did not publish any of his writings during his lifetime, but hid them in a secret place.

Close to his demise, he informed a close associate, saying, "I have not exposed any of my writings, because I did not have the appropriate level of sincerity. My end is near. When I am in the throes of death, then you should grasp my hand. If I take hold of your hand and squeeze it, know that none of my efforts have been accepted. You should then take all my books and throw them into the Tigris during the night. However, if my hand remains loose and limp, then know that my efforts have been accepted and I have been successful in my quest for sincerity."

The person did as he was advised. Imām Al-Māwardī's رض hand remained loose and only then were his writings published.²

Secret of a Sincere Soldier

Maslamah ibn 'Abdul Malik رض surrounded an enemy fort at the head of the Muslim army, but found it difficult to penetrate. Finally, an opening was created in one of its walls, but, none of the soldiers were bold enough

1 Tārīkh Dimishq, vol 58, p 36

2 Tabaqātush Shāfi'iyyah Al-Kubrā, vol 5, p 268

to enter. Eventually, a man stepped forward and entered the fort. Through his bravery, Allāh ﷺ granted victory to the Muslims.

Maslamah ؓ had an announcement made that the soldier who had initiated the entrance to the fort should come forward, but nobody responded. The call was repeated a number of times, but there was no response.

After the fourth call, a man approached him, and said, “I am the man who entered through the opening. Please promise me three things: Firstly, do not record my name. Secondly, do not reward me in any way. And, thirdly, do not attempt to divert me from my goal of being a sincere servant of Allāh ﷺ.”

Maslamah ؓ replied, “You have my word.”

The stranger disappeared and was never seen again. Thereafter, Maslamah ؓ would supplicate after each Ṣalāh : “O Allāh ﷺ, unite me with the one who initiated the entry through the opening in the wall of the fort.”¹



Sincerity is achieved when one becomes focused upon Allāh’s ﷺ pleasure and disregards other motives.



A Patient Mother

Abū Qudāmah was a mujāhid who fought valiantly against the Romans. One day, whilst sitting in Masjidun Nabawī, a group of people requested him to relate the most fascinating incident that he had experienced during his battles in the path of Allāh ﷺ.

¹ Tārīkh Dimishq, vol 58, p 36

He agreed and said: I entered the city of Raqqah with the intention of purchasing a camel for loading my weapons. One day, a woman approached me and said, “O Abū Qudāmah, I heard you encouraging people to fight in jihād. My braids of hair¹ are longer than that of other women. I have cut them and made them into a rope to be used as reigns for a horse. I have also mixed it with sand so that nobody would be able to see it. I would like you to take it with you when you proceed to the battlefields. If you have no use for it, you may give it to somebody else who may need it, so that my braids may be touched by the dust in the path of Allāh ﷺ. I am a widow, whose husband and family were martyred in the path of Allāh ﷺ. If jihād was compulsory upon me, I too would go out into the battlefield.”

She then handed me the rope and continued, “My husband left behind a young boy, who is now fifteen years old. He is the most handsome of youth. He is well-versed in the Qur’ān and has done training in horsemanship and archery. By night, he performs Ṣalāh and by day, he fasts. At present he is away seeing to the affairs of the property left by his father. If he returns prior to your departure, I shall present him to you as a gift so that he may join you in the path of Allāh ﷺ. I beg you, by the sanctity of Islam, not to reject my request, as I desire reward from Allāh ﷺ.”

Abū Qudāmah says: I accepted the rope, and she then said to me, “Please place it amongst your other possessions immediately, so that my heart would be at ease.”

I did as she advised. I then left Raqqah together with my companions. We had barely reached the fort of Maslamah ibn ‘Abdul Malik, when I heard a rider on horseback shouting, “Abū Qudāmah, wait!”

I advised my companions to proceed, while I waited. The rider came to me and embraced me, saying, “All praise be to Allāh ﷺ. Who did not deprive me of your company and did not cause me to return home unsuccessful.”

I said to him, “My beloved boy, show me your face. If you qualify, you may join us, or else I will have to command you to return home.”

¹ See footnote on page 50.

As he opened his face, I noticed a young boy, whose face was as beautiful as the full moon.

I asked, "My beloved boy, do you have a father?"

He replied, "No. But, I would like to join you to avenge the death of my martyred father. Perhaps, Allāh ﷺ may also grant me martyrdom like He had granted my father."

I asked, "Do you have a mother?"

He replied, "Yes."

I explained, "Go and ask her permission. If she agrees, you may join us, else you should return and serve her. Your obedience to her is more virtuous than jihād, because Jannah lies beneath the shade of the swords and the feet of mothers."

He asked in amazement, "Abū Qudāmah, do you not recognise me?"

"No", I replied.

He explained, "I am the son of that woman who left you a trust. How could you have forgotten the request of my mother, who gave you the rope? I will, Inshā-Allāh, become *shahīd ibn shahīd*¹. I beg you not to deprive me of participating in jihād. I am a *Hāfidh*² of the Qur'ān and am knowledgeable with regard to the Sunnah of Nabī ﷺ. In addition, I am a good rider and marksman. You have not left behind a rider as good as me, so do not look down upon me due to my young age. My mother has made me take a promise that I will not return home. She advised me, "O my beloved son, when you face the disbelievers in battle, do not turn your back and flee from them. Sacrifice yourself for Allāh ﷺ and seek His pleasure. Seek the company of your father and pious uncles in Jannah. If Allāh ﷺ grants you martyrdom, intercede for me, as I have heard that a martyr would intercede for seventy of his family members and seventy of his neighbours." She then pressed me against her bosom and raised her head towards the heavens, saying, 'My Lord, Master and Protector, this is my son, the sweet smelling flower and fruit of my heart. I am handing him over to You. Unite him with his father.'

Abū Qudāmah continues: When I heard the words of the young boy, I began to cry uncontrollably out of distress over him sacrificing

1 A martyr and the son of a martyr.

2 One who has memorised the entire Qur'ān.

his youthfulness in this way and, in amazement at the patience of his mother.

When he saw me crying, he asked, "O my uncle, what makes you cry? If you are crying at my young age, remember that Allāh ﷺ punishes those who are younger than me when they disobey Him."

I replied, "I am not crying because of your age, but the thought of what will become of your mother has brought tears to my eyes."

We proceeded and took the young boy with us. I observed his movements and actions carefully. He was perpetually in the remembrance of Allāh ﷺ. On horseback, he was the best of riders. When we camped, he would serve us. As we moved on, his resolve grew stronger and his enthusiasm intensified.

We continued, until we came face to face with the enemy as the sun was setting. We set up camp and the boy began preparing food for us to break our fast. But, fatigue overpowered him, and he fell into a deep slumber. As he slept, I observed a smile on his face and asked my companion, "Do you not see the smile on the face of this boy as he sleeps?"

When he awoke, I remarked, "My dear boy, I saw you smiling in your sleep just now."

He replied, "Yes, I saw an amazing dream."

I asked, "What was it about?"

He answered, "I saw myself in a beautiful green garden. As I was walking, I saw a palace made of silver and decorated with pearls and jewels. Its doors were of gold and its curtains were drawn. Suddenly, young maidens, whose faces shone like the moon, raised the curtains. When they saw me, they said, 'Welcome!' I stretched forth my hand towards one of them, but she remarked, 'Do not be hasty. Your time has not yet come.' I then heard them speaking amongst themselves, 'This is the husband of Mardiyah.' They said to me, 'Proceed! May Allāh ﷺ have mercy upon you.' I proceeded. At the top of the palace was a room made of gold. Therein was a bed made of green chrysolite. Its corners were of white silver. Upon the bed, sat a maiden whose face shone like the sun. Had Allāh ﷺ not protected me, I would have lost my sight due to the brilliance of the room and the beauty of the maiden. She said, 'Welcome, O saint and beloved of Allāh ﷺ. I am yours and you are mine.' I wanted to

embrace her but she remarked, 'Do not be hasty. You are not entitled to touch me yet. We will meet tomorrow at the time of Zuhr. Glad tidings to you!'"

I said to him, "You have seen a wonderful dream. Glad tidings to you!"

We fell asleep, amazed at the boy's dream. The next morning, we mounted our horses and heard the announcement being made: "O horsemen of Allāh ﷺ, ride and receive the glad tidings of Jannah!"

أَنْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَّقَالَ

"March forth light and heavy." (Sūrah At-Tawbah, verse 41)

Within the hour, the enemy was in our midst like locusts. The first to enter the battlefield from our ranks, was the young boy. He pounced upon them and split their ranks, killing many a brave soldier. When I saw him in this state, I grabbed hold of his reins and warned, "My dear boy, return! You are young and inexperienced regarding the intricacies of battle."

He replied, "My uncle, have you not heard the words of Allāh ﷺ,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيْتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحْفًا فَلَا تُوْلُوْهُمُ الْأَدْبَارَ

O you who believe! When you meet those who disbelieve, in the battlefield, never turn your backs to them.

(Sūrah Al-Anfāl, verse 15)

Would you prefer me to enter hell-fire?"

As we spoke, the disbelievers launched an attack against us. I was separated from the young boy and all of us were forced to engage the enemy. Many Muslims were martyred and the dead could not even be counted. When the two armies had separated, I began galloping between the dead bodies. They could not be identified, due to the dust on their faces, and the blood that flowed from their bodies. Suddenly, I noticed a young boy amongst the hooves of the horses. He was covered in dust and was rolling in his blood, saying, "O Muslims, send Abū Qudāmah to me!"

As I heard his screams, I rushed to his side, but could not recognise him. His face had been trampled beneath the hooves of the horses. "It is me, Abū Qudāmah!" I remarked.

He said, "O my uncle, my dream has come true, by the Lord of the Ka'bah. I am the son of that woman who gave you the rope."

When I heard this, I threw myself upon him and kissed him on his forehead. I wiped the dust and blood from his face and said, "O my beloved boy, do not forget your uncle, Abū Qudāmah, on the day of Qiyāmah when you are given the opportunity to intercede."

He replied, "A man like you can never be forgotten. You are wiping my face with your clothing! My clothing is more deserving of my blood than yours. Leave it, my uncle, I would love to meet Allāh ﷺ as I am. My uncle, this maiden that I described to you is standing by my side, waiting for my soul to separate from my body, saying, 'Make haste, I desire your company!' By Allāh, if He returns you safe and sound, take this cloth of mine, that is drenched in blood, to my poor mother. Give it to her so that she may know that I fulfilled her request and was not a coward when challenged by the enemy. Convey my salāms to her and say, 'Allāh ﷺ has accepted the gift that you presented.' My beloved uncle, I also have a little sister, ten years of age. Whenever I would enter our home, she would run to welcome me and greet me and when I would leave home, she would be the last to bid me farewell. When I left home the last time, she said to me, 'By Allāh, my brother, do not keep us waiting for too long.'

When you see her, convey my salāms to her and say, 'Your brother has said that Allāh ﷺ will see to you in his absence until the day of Qiyāmah.' He then smiled and said,

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ صَدَقَ وَعْدَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّداً عَبْدُهُ

وَرَسُولُهُ هَذَا مَا وَعَدْنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

"I bear witness that there is no being worthy of worship besides Allāh ﷺ. He has no partner. He has fulfilled His promise. And I bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and messenger. This is what Allāh ﷺ and His messenger had promised, and Allāh and His messenger had spoken the truth." "

Saying these words, his soul departed from his body. We shrouded him in his clothing and buried him. May Allāh ﷺ be pleased with him and us!

When we returned from the battle and entered the city of Raqqah, I proceeded straight to the home of the boy's mother. Standing at the door, I saw a young girl, just as good-looking as the young boy. When anybody passed by her, she would ask, "O my uncle, where have you come from?"

They would reply that they had returned from battle. She would then ask if her brother had come back. They would all reply that they did not know who her brother was. I went up to her and she asked, "Where have you come from?"

I replied, "From the battle."

She asked, "Has my brother not come back with you?" She then began to cry, saying, "What is going on? I see so many men returning, but my brother has not come!"

Tears filled my eyes, but I wiped them away for fear of putting the little girl into distress.

I said to her, "Little girl, say to your mother that Abū Qudāmah is at the door and she should come out and speak to him."

Her mother heard my words and emerged. Her face was pale. I greeted, and she replied. She then asked, "Abū Qudāmah, have you come with glad tidings or with condolences?"

I answered, "What do you mean by glad tidings and condolences?"

She explained, "If my son has returned safely, then you are a bearer of condolences. If he has been martyred in the path of Allāh ﷺ, then you are a bearer of glad tidings."

I replied, "Glad tidings be to you! Allāh ﷺ has accepted your gift."

She cried and asked, "Has He really accepted it?"

"Yes," I replied.

She said, "Praise be to Allāh ﷺ Who has made my son a provision for me in the Hereafter."

I then asked, "Where is his little sister?"

She replied, "She was the one who spoke to you just now."

She came to me, and I said, “Your brother has conveyed his salām to you and says that Allāh ﷺ will see to you in his absence until the day of Qiyāmah.”

When she heard this, she screamed and collapsed. I shook her, but she had already passed away. I was shocked at the spectacle. I handed over the boy’s bloodstained clothing to his mother and bid her farewell. I returned, saddened at the thought of the boy and his sister, but amazed at the patience of their mother.¹



The enthusiasm of the young and the guidance of the old are vital elements in raising the flag of sacrifice in the battlefields of Islam.



A Lesson in Sacrifice

Moulānā Muḥammad ‘Alī Jawhar رحمه اللہ had made up his mind that he would continue opposing the British, until the Muslims gained independence from British rule in India. In this quest, Moulānā left for England and began writing in the British press. He made an intention that he would not return home until the Muslims were free. Due to his fervent and passionate efforts, he was put through many trials and tribulations, including imprisonment.

Once, his daughter became quite ill and the doctors advised that her end was drawing near. Since she was quite young, her mother requested whether she had any final requests. She replied that her heart’s desire was to see her father for the last time. Her mother dispatched a letter to Moulānā Muḥammad ‘Alī رحمه اللہ requesting him to fulfil his daughter’s final

¹ Ṣifatuṣ Ṣafwah, p 801; Sūqul ‘Urūs Wa Ansun Nufūs

request. When he received the letter, he wrote the following two couplets on the reverse side and returned it :

میں تو مجبور بہوں اللہ تو مجبور نہیں
 تجھ سے میں دور بہوں وہ تو مگر دور نہیں
 تیری صحت بیمیں منظور ہے لیکن اس کو
 نہیں منظور تو پھر بھم کو بھی منظور نہیں

"I am restrained, but Allāh is not. I am far from you, but Allāh is not.

We desire good health for you. But, if Allāh does not sanction it, we cannot either."¹



The valiant soldiers of Islamic history were determined to unflinchingly uphold and spread the truth of Islam, even if their wives were made widows and their children rendered orphans in the process.



Chastity Strengthens Faith

Aṭā ibn Yasār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and his brother, Sulaimān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, set out to perform Haj together with a few companions. When they reached Abwā, they stopped to rest. Sulaimān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and the other companions left to perform some errands and 'Aṭā رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was left alone. He began performing optional Ṣalāh.

After a while, a beautiful bedouin woman approached him. When he saw her, he thought that she needed something and shortened his Ṣalāh.

¹ Ahle Dil Ke Tarpā Dene Wāle Wāqi'āt, p 64

He then asked, "Do you require anything?"

She replied, "Yes,"

He asked, "And what is it that you require?"

She replied, "Fulfil your desires with me. I have no husband and I am overcome with desire."

He replied, "Please depart from me! Do not be a means of us entering and burning in the fire of Jahannam (hell)."

As he stood there, she continued to entice him, but he refused. Finally, he began to weep uncontrollably and cried out, "Woe to you! Please leave me alone."

His weeping and trembling was so intense, that the woman was also moved to tears. They continued weeping until Sulaimān ﷺ returned. When he saw 'Atā ﷺ weeping, and the woman sitting and weeping in a corner, he too was reduced to tears, even though he was not aware of the cause of their weeping. As each of the companions returned, they too were taken aback and began weeping. When their wailing and crying had become quite intense, the woman stood up and left. The companions, who were seated outside, then entered. Out of respect, Sulaimān ﷺ did not question 'Atā ﷺ regarding the matter, as he was the younger of the two brothers. They then proceeded to Egypt. One night, 'Atā ﷺ awoke from his sleep, crying.

Sulaimān ﷺ asked him, "Brother, why are you crying?" 'Atā ﷺ did not reply. Instead, his crying intensified.

His brother again asked, "Why are you crying?"

'Atā ﷺ explained, "I have seen a dream."

Sulaimān ﷺ asked, "What did you see in your dream?"

'Atā ﷺ replied, "I will relate it to you on condition that you do not divulge it to anybody as long as I am alive. In the dream, I was amongst a group of people who saw the Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ. His beauty moved me to tears. He noticed me, and asked why I was crying. I replied, 'May my parents be sacrificed for you, O Nabī of Allāh! I remembered your trials with the wife of the 'Azīz of Egypt, your imprisonment and your separation from your father, Ya'qūb ﷺ. These events amazed me and made me cry.' Yūsuf ﷺ then remarked, 'Are you not amazed at that person who was

with the bedouin woman at Abwā?’ At that point, I realised who he was referring to and began to cry, and my eyes opened in this state.”

Sulaimān ﷺ then enquired, “And what was the matter regarding the woman at Abwā?”

‘Aṭā ﷺ related the story to him. Sulaimān ﷺ did not mention the incident to anybody until ‘Aṭā ﷺ had passed away. One day, he related it to a female family member. After Sulaimān ﷺ had also passed away, the incident became known to the inhabitants of Madīnah.¹



Abstention from illicit relations purifies the heart and strengthens Īmān (faith).



The Sage and the Temptress

A very beautiful woman, who lived in Makkah, was admiring herself in the mirror and asked her husband, “Is there any man who will see my face, but will not be tempted by it?”

He replied, “Yes.”

She asked, “Who?”

He answered, “‘Ubaid ibn ‘Umair ﷺ.”

She asked, “Will you allow me to tempt and entice him?”

He agreed. She approached ‘Ubaid ibn ‘Umair ﷺ, pretending to ask him an important question. When they were in a corner of Masjidul Harām, she unveiled her face and it shone like the full moon.

‘Ubaid ﷺ asked her, “O slave of Allāh ﷺ, what would you like to ask?”

She replied, “Please fulfil my desires as I am in love with you.”

¹ Sifatus Ṣafwah, p 318

'Ubaid رض replied, "I would like to ask you a few questions. If you reply truthfully, I will consider your request."

She remarked, "I will most certainly reply truthfully to as many questions as you wish to pose to me."

'Ubaid رض asked, "If the angel of death comes to take your soul, would you be pleased that I fulfil your request at that time?"

She replied, "By Allāh, never!"

'Ubaid رض then said, "You have spoken the truth. If you are lowered into your grave and about to be questioned by the angels, would you be pleased that I fulfil your request at that time?"

She replied, "By Allāh, never!"

'Ubaid رض then said, "You have spoken the truth. When people are given their book of deeds and you do not know whether you will receive yours in your right or left hand, would you be pleased that I fulfil your request at that time?"

She replied, "By Allāh, never!"

'Ubaid رض then said, "You have spoken the truth. If you are about to cross the bridge of Sirāt and you do not know whether you will make it across, would you be pleased that I fulfil your request at that time?"

She replied, "By Allāh, never!"

'Ubaid رض then said, "You have spoken the truth. When the scales of deeds are brought and you do not know whether yours are heavy or light, would you be pleased that I fulfil your request at that time?"

She replied, "By Allāh, never!"

'Ubaid رض then said, "You have spoken the truth. When you are standing before Allāh عز to account for your deeds, would you be pleased that I fulfil your request at that time?"

She replied, "By Allāh, never!"

'Ubaid رض then said to her, "You have spoken the truth. O slave of Allāh, fear Him as He has bestowed you with many bounties."

The woman then returned to her husband, who asked, "What happened?"

She replied, "We have been wasting away our lives until now." She then dedicated her time to Ṣalāh, fasting and other forms of worship. Thereafter, her husband would often remark, "What has 'Ubaid done to

me? Every night she was like a bride, but now she has no inclination to the world.”¹



One who contemplates over the reality of death and accountability in the Hereafter will abstain from any potential sin.



Honesty Draws Divine Blessings

Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr At-Ṭabarī ﷺ narrates : In the year 240 Hijrī, I was in Makkah, where I heard a person from Khurasān announcing, “O pilgrims, whoever finds a purse containing a thousand dinārs, should kindly return it to me. May Allāh ﷺ reward you well!”

An old man from Makkah approached him and said, “O Khurasānī, the inhabitants of this city are experiencing difficult times and the time for Ḥaj is near. Perhaps, your purse has been found by a man who will return it to you, if you give him a portion thereof, which will then be ḥalāl for him to utilise.”

The Khurasānī asked, “How much does he want?”

The old man answered, “One tenth of it - a hundred dinārs.”

The Khurasānī said, “I cannot do that. Instead, I will hand the matter over to Allāh ﷺ.” They then separated.

Ibn Jarīr says: I thought to myself that the old man had himself found the purse, as he appeared destitute. I followed him and my assumption was confirmed. He entered a run-down old house and called out, ‘O Lubābah!’

From within, a woman replied, “I am here, Abū Ghayāth.”

¹ Al-Muntażam, vol 6, p 197; Ath-Thiqāt

He said, “I found the owner of the dinārs making an announcement for it, but he does not intend rewarding the person who has found it. I suggested to him that he should give a tenth of it to the finder but he refused. What should we do, as the money has to be returned?”

His wife replied, “We have lived in poverty with you for the past fifty years. You have four daughters, two sisters, my mother and myself to support. Feed us and clothe us with the money! Perhaps, Allāh ﷺ will make you wealthy and you can then return it, or He will settle the debt on your behalf.”

But the old man refused, saying, “I will not destroy the final moments of my life after being patient for eighty-six years!”

Ibn Jarīr continues: The discussion then terminated and I returned. The next day, I again heard the Khurasānī calling out, “O pilgrims who have come from far and near, whoever finds a purse containing a thousand dinārs, should kindly return it to me. May Allāh ﷺ reward you well!”

Again the old man approached him and said, “I advised you yesterday that our city is in the midst of a drought and its inhabitants are poor. I advised you to give a portion of it as a reward to the finder, but you refused. Assign a reward of ten dinārs to the finder. Perhaps, the money will be returned to you and the reward of ten dinārs will preserve the honour of the finder as well.”

The Khurasānī said, “I cannot do so. Instead, I will hand the matter over to Allāh ﷺ.” They then separated.

Ibn Jarīr says: This time, I did not follow the old man or the Khurasānī, but continued with my writing. The next day, the Khurasānī again made the announcement. The old man again approached him and said, “First I advised you to give a hundred dinārs as a reward and then ten dinārs. Now, I appeal to you to give only one dinār as a reward. With half a dinār, the finder may purchase a water bag which he can use to give water to the people of Makkah and thereby earn a living, and with the remaining half dinār, he may purchase a sheep which will provide milk for his family.”

Again the Khurasānī refused, saying, “I cannot do so. I will hand the matter over to Allāh ﷺ.”

The old man then pulled the Khurasānī, saying, “Please come and take your purse from me so that I can be relieved of the burden and sleep

peacefully at nights." The old man led the Khurasānī, and I followed them to his house. He entered, and after a short while, asked the Khurasānī to enter as well. He dug open a small hole in the ground and removed the purse. It was black in colour and firmly tied with a string.

He asked the Khurasānī, "Is this your purse?"

The Khurasānī looked at it and said, "Yes. This is my purse." He untied the string and emptied the dinārs onto his lap. He then ran his fingers through them a few times and remarked, "These are my dinārs."

He placed all of them back into the purse, tied it loosely and rose to leave. As he reached the door, he turned around and said to the old man, "My father passed away (May Allāh ﷺ have mercy upon him!) and left behind three-thousand dinārs. He instructed me to give a third of it to the most deserving person I could find. He also advised me to sell his conveyance and use the proceeds for my Ḥaj expenses. I did as my father had advised. I placed a third of his wealth, a thousand dinārs, in this purse. Since I left Khurasān, I have not met anybody more deserving of it than you. Take it and may Allāh ﷺ grant you *barakah* therein." He then left, leaving the purse with the old man.

Ibn Jarīr رض says: I turned to leave, but the old man followed me and brought me back. He made me sit down and said, "I noticed you following me from the first day and you are well aware of what has transpired between us. I have heard a Ḥadīth in which 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar رض mentioned that Nabi صلی الله علیه و آله و سلّم said to 'Umar رض and 'Alī رض, 'If Allāh عز و جل grants you a gift without you requesting it, then accept it. Do not reject it, as it is as if you are throwing it back at Allāh عز و جل.'¹ This is a gift from Allāh عز و جل to everyone present here."

The old man then called out to his daughters, sisters, wife and her mother. When all ten of us were seated, he opened the purse saying, "Spread a cloth over your laps."

I complied, but the women did not have excess clothing to do the same, and spread out their hands, instead. He then began handing out one dinār to each of us. This continued until the purse was empty.

1 Mu'jamul Awsat Liṭ Ṭabarānī

Ibn Jarīr ﷺ says: I was more pleased for them than for myself. As I left, the old man said to me, “Young man, you are fortunate to receive such a large sum of wealth. I have never seen such wealth in my entire life. Know that it is halāl and look after it well. We have lived in poverty all our lives. Everyday, the womenfolk and I used to take turns wearing this old garment to perform our Fajr Ṣalāh. I would then go out to earn something, between Zuhrah and ‘Aṣr Ṣalāh. In the evening, I would return with that which Allāh ﷺ had granted me. This would include some dates, cheese, pieces of bread and some discarded vegetables. I would then remove my garment and we would again take turns to perform Maghrib and ‘Ishā’. May Allāh ﷺ bless the women, myself and you with what we have received. May Allāh ﷺ have mercy on the deceased person, who owned this wealth and reward the person who brought it to us.”

Ibn Jarīr ﷺ says: I greeted the old man and left. For two years, I used the wealth to pay for travel expenses, rental and to purchase paper for my studies. After sixteen years, I returned to Makkah and enquired about the old man. I was informed that he had passed away a few months after the incident had transpired. His daughters were married to kings and princes. His sisters, wife and her mother had also passed away. I visited the daughters’ husbands and children and related to them the incident. They honoured me and treated me kindly.¹



Honesty draws divine blessings.



¹ Ṣifatus Ṣafwah, p 396



Wisdom of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah أبو حنيفه عليه السلام

The Roman emperor sent a handsome quantity of wealth to the Khalīph of the Muslims, together with three questions, which were to be posed to the 'Ulamā. If the questions were answered correctly, the wealth would be awarded to them. If they could not provide answers, the Muslims would be requested to compensate them financially. The 'Ulamā were questioned, but could not provide satisfactory answers. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah أبو حنيفه عليه السلام, a young lad at that time, requested the Khalīph to give him an opportunity to respond, and he agreed.

The Roman representative was sitting on a pulpit when the young boy asked, "Will you be posing the questions?"

"Yes," replied the Roman representative.

The young boy said, "In that case, you should descend to the floor and I should occupy the pulpit." The representative climbed down and the young boy ascended.

The Roman representative then asked, "What was in existence before Allāh?"

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah أبو حنيفه عليه السلام replied by posing a question, "Do you know mathematics?"

"Yes," he answered.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah أبو حنيفه عليه السلام continued, "What precedes the number one?"

He replied, "One is the first number. Nothing is before it."

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah أبو حنيفه عليه السلام explained, "If there is nothing before the figurative number one, how can there be anything before the actual One (Allāh ﷺ)?"

The Roman representative then posed the second question, "In which direction is Allāh facing?"

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah أبو حنيفه عليه السلام replied with a question, "When you light a lamp, in which direction does it shine?"

He replied, “The light spreads equally on all four sides.”

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رض explained, “If a figurative light that can be lit and extinguished has no direction, how can the light of the Creator of the heavens and the earth, which is eternal and overpowering, ever have a direction?”

The Roman representative then posed the third question, “What is Allāh doing?”

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رض replied, “He has brought down polytheists like you from a pulpit and raised monotheists like me from the ground.”

The Roman representative left the wealth and departed.¹



The Imāms of the four madhāhib² were intellectuals of a high order who could quickly silence their enemies due to the vast knowledge with which Allāh عز had blessed them.



Discipline Begins at Home

Judge Passes Verdict Against His Son

Qādhī Shuraiḥ ibn Al-Ḥārith رض was an outstanding Muslim judge who was appointed by ‘Umar رض. He served as a judge for sixty years. One day, his son said to him, “I have a dispute with a group of people. Please advise me how to handle the matter. If I am correct in your opinion, then I will proceed with the matter in court, otherwise, I will drop the case.” He then related the case to his father.

1 Al-Ashbāh Wan Nazā’ir, p 415

2 Refers to the four schools of thought in Islamic Fiqh.

Qādhī Shuraih رضي الله عنه heard the story and advised his son to proceed with the case. When it was brought to the court, Qādhī Shuraih رضي الله عنه gave the verdict against his son. When they returned home, his son said to him, “By Allāh, had I not presented the case to you in court, you would not have been constrained to disgrace me!”

His father replied, “By Allāh, my beloved son, you are dearer to me than the entire world, but Allāh عز وجل is more exalted in my sight than you. If I had informed you that you did not have a valid case, you would have reconciled with your opponents, depriving them of certain rights which were due to them.”¹

Does My Son have Respect for Knowledge?

Shah Waliyullāh Muḥaddith Dehlawī رضي الله عنه was approaching the end of his life. One day, his son, Shah ‘Abdul ‘Azīz رضي الله عنه, was delivering Qur’ān lessons and asked for a glass of water. A student of his quickly ran home with the request. When Shah Waliyullāh رضي الله عنه heard the request, he drew a breath of uneasiness and remarked, “How sad! The *nūr* (celestial light) of knowledge has been removed from my family.”

His wife advised, “Do not be so hasty! Allow me to investigate the matter first.” She poured the water into the glass, but added some vinegar to it as well.

The student returned to the gathering and presented the water. Shah ‘Abdul ‘Azīz رضي الله عنه drank it and continued as normal. When he had completed the lesson and arrived home, his mother asked, “Son, did you drink the water?”

He replied, “Yes, I did.”

His mother asked, “And how did it taste?”

He replied, “Mother, I do not know how it tasted.”

The mother then returned to Shah Waliyullāh رضي الله عنه and explained, “Shah ‘Abdul ‘Azīz رضي الله عنه did not even realise that the water had been mixed with vinegar. His request was because of extreme thirst and necessity. He would not have been able to continue the lesson without it. It did not constitute any form of disrespect towards the Qur’ān. Respect for knowledge has not left our family as yet.”

¹ *Şifatus Şafwah*, p 533

Upon hearing this, Shah Waliyullāh رض breathed a sigh of relief and made du‘ā’, “O Allāh عز وجل, I beseech you to allow knowledge and respect to remain firmly entrenched within my family.”¹



Parents should be concerned about the spiritual condition of their offspring and be prepared to take decisive remedial action when the need arises.



Fear of Accountability to Allāh عز وجل

There once lived a vile woman of extraordinary beauty. She was a prostitute and allowed only such men to come to her who could pay her a hundred dinārs for her services. One day, a pious man cast his gaze at her and was taken aback by her beauty. He began to work very hard and eventually saved a hundred dinārs. He then approached her. After the money was counted and handed over, she invited him in. Her beauty and form were beyond description. She lived in a luxurious home and had a bed made of gold. As she invited him to fulfil his desires with her, he suddenly thought about himself standing before Allāh عز وجل. He began to tremble and his desire for her dissipated.

He said to her, “Allow me to leave. You may keep the hundred dinārs.”

She replied, “What is the matter? You were attracted by my beauty when you first saw me, and you worked hard to earn a hundred dinārs. Now, when you have the ability of fulfilling your desires with me, you refuse to do so!”

¹ Ahle Dil Ke Tarpā Dene Wāle Wāqi‘āt, p310

He explained, “I have done this out of the fear of Allāh ﷺ and the thought of standing before Him. I have no inclination towards you any more!”

She replied, “If you are truthful in what you say, then I would like to marry you.”

He pleaded, “Please allow me to leave immediately.”

She replied, “No! You may only leave if you promise to marry me.”

But he refused and began to leave. She called out, “Allow me to come with you. I want you to marry me.”

“Perhaps,” he replied. He drew his clothes over his body and left for his home town.

She was so remorseful over what had transpired between them, that she decided to take all her wealth and travel in search of him. When she arrived at the place where he lived, she enquired who he was and where he resided. In the meantime, he was informed that a wealthy woman had arrived and was enquiring about him. When he saw her, he was so shocked that he collapsed and died, before her. When she realised that she had lost her opportunity to marry him, she enquired if he had any relatives. She was informed that he had a brother who was destitute. He was brought to her and she requested to marry him out of love for his brother. He agreed to her request and in due course, they were blessed with seven pious sons.¹



A single lustful gaze may easily destroy the reward of many years of worship.



The realisation that Allāh ﷺ is watching is a powerful deterrent to sin.



¹ Al-Muntaṣam Fī Tārīkhil Mulūk Wal Umam, vol 2, p 181



Collapse of the Muslims in Russia

A number of Jewish families settled in the vicinity of Bukhārā and Samarqand. Their children were enrolled at the largest Madrasah in the area, where Imām Bukhārī رض had once taught. These children were extremely intelligent and well-groomed. During the day they would learn about Islam, but at night, their parents would remind them that they were Jews, who were being sent to an Islamic institute for the sole purpose of resisting and opposing Islam at a later stage. Since these students were hand-picked and extremely intelligent, they outshone the others. In this way, they were held dear by their mentors and were offered teaching posts at the same institute after qualifying. One particular student from amongst them, who was exceedingly intelligent and well-read, was appointed as the deputy Muftī of the Madrasah. He was later appointed as the principal Muftī upon the demise of his senior. Once in command, he began issuing verdicts which were in conflict with the accepted rulings of the majority of the 'Ulamā. When questioned, he would explain his way out by presenting some or other wayward explanation. As an example, he once explained that a woman was justified in cutting her long hair as it was more prone to lice infestation. In this way, he began presenting ridiculous proofs, hence two groups began to emerge amongst the once united group of scholars.

One day, an attendant of the Muftī noticed that the Muftī's lips were motionless in Ṣalāh. He found this quite strange. While cleaning, he also noticed that the muṣallah upon which he performed Ṣalāh, had the name of Muḥammad ﷺ written at the bottom of it. He found it quite disrespectful that a Muftī could perform Ṣalāh standing on the blessed name of Nabī ﷺ.

He reported the matter to the ruler, who did some investigations and discovered the name of Nabī ﷺ as mentioned. The Muftī was arrested and interrogated. He confessed how he had been chosen and trained to

attain the position of principal Muftī. He explained that his verdicts were issued to cause conflict within the Muslim ranks. Accordingly, he was put to death, but the dissension he had succeeded in creating could not be resolved. This was the stepping-stone to the downfall of the Muslims in Russia, a land where numerous 'Ulamā and Islamic institutions once flourished.¹



The enemies of Islam often weaken the enthusiasm and resolve of the Muslims by means of deceitful planning.



A Fire-worshipper is Guided

When Islam was the dominant religion, Muslims would command respect from the followers of other faiths. There was a fire-worshipper, who noticed his son eating during the month of Ramaḍān in the presence of Muslims. He was infuriated and reprimanded his son, "How could you destroy the sanctity of the Muslims during the month of Ramaḍān?"

After his death, a scholar from the neighbourhood saw him in a dream, enjoying the bounties of paradise. He was quite surprised and asked, "Were you not a fire-worshipper?"

The man replied, "Yes, I was. However, as I was about to pass away, Allāh ﷺ granted me the good fortune of accepting Islam due to the respect I displayed for the month of Ramaḍān."²

1 Āzād Riyāsato Ke Chashm Dīda Ḥālāt, p 12

2 Nuzhatul Majālis, p 201



Respect for the distinguishing features and symbols of Islam draws Allāh's ﷺ special mercy.



Repentance of a Musician

Once 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ was passing by an area of Kūfah, where a group of people were drinking wine. Amongst them was a man by the name of Zādān, who was entertaining them by singing.

When 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ heard this, he remarked, "What a melodious voice! If only he would use it to recite the Qur'ān!" He then placed a shawl over his head and left. Zādān noticed this and asked who he was and what he had said.

He was informed, "That was 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ, a companion of Nabī ﷺ. He praised your voice and said how wonderful it would be if you would use it to recite the Qur'ān."

When Zādān heard this, his heart was shattered. He stood up, threw his lute (musical instrument) to the ground and ran behind 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ. He cried and 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ embraced him. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ, also in tears, then remarked, "Why should I not love a person whom Allāh ﷺ loves?"

Zādān repented from his sins and remained with 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ to learn the Qur'ān. His desire for knowledge was so intense, that he became a great scholar of his time.¹

¹ Kitābut Tawwābīn, p 214; Tambīhul Ghāfilīn



The mission of the pious servants of Allāh ﷺ has always been to advise and guide the misguided by words of wisdom.

The worst of sinners can be transformed into the greatest of saints through the mercy of Allāh ﷺ.



A Principled Scholar

Qādī Bakkār ibn Qutaibah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ was a pious judge, who lived in Egypt during the reign of Ibn Ṭūlūn. Ibn Ṭūlūn would often attend his discourses on Ḥadīth. Ibn Ṭūlūn would give him a thousand dinārs a year in addition to his stipulated salary. However, their relationship was strained when Ibn Ṭūlūn requested Qādī Bakkār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ to pass a judgement rejecting the khilāfah of Mutawakkil. The judge refused to do so and was imprisoned¹ by Ibn Ṭūlūn, who further requested him to return all the money that he had been given. Upon this, the judge returned all eighteen sealed bags with a thousand dinārs in each. At this, Ibn Ṭūlūn was quite embarrassed and conceded, “This judge will surely enter Jannah!”²



Men of principle are unaffected by the riches which the wealthy often

1 While in prison, his students complained that they were deprived of the knowledge of Ḥadīth. The judge was then allowed to give lessons through a window from his prison cell.

2 An-Nujūmuz Zāhirah Fī Mulūk Miṣr Wal Qāhirah, vol 3, p 24; Al-Wāfi Bil Wafayāt

use to entice and persuade them.



The Sister of Bishr Al-Hāfi بِشْرُ الْحَافِي

Bishr Al-Hāfi بِشْرُ الْحَافِي had three sisters : Mudghah مُدْغَحَّةٌ, Mukhah مُخَاهَّةٌ and Zubdah زُبْدَةٌ. All of them were known for their piety. Mudghah مُدْغَحَّةٌ who was the eldest, passed away before Bishr بِشْرُ الْحَافِي. He was visibly saddened and wept profusely. When questioned, he explained, “I have read that when a servant of Allāh اللَّهُ shows deficiency in his worship, then his close companion is taken away from him and my sister was indeed a close companion of mine.”

‘Abdullāh, the son of Imām Ahmād ibn Ḥanbal ابْنُ حَانَبَلٍ, narrates: One day, a woman came to my father and said, “I sew at night, using the light of a lamp. When the lamp switches off, I continue to sew by the light of the moon. Should I inform those who buy cloth from me that some of it was sewn by the light of a lamp, while the remainder was sewn by moonlight?”

Imām Ahmād ابْنُ حَانَبَلٍ replied, “If there is a difference in quality between the two, then you need to mention this at the time of sale.”

She then asked, “Does the wailing sound of a sick person constitute a complaint?”

Imām Ahmād ابْنُ حَانَبَلٍ replied, “I would hope that it is not a complaint, but a call to Allāh اللَّهُ showing one’s weakness.”

She then left. My father said to me, “I have never heard a person ask such a question before. Follow her and find out who she is.” I did so, and noticed her entering the house of Bishr Al-Hāfi بِشْرُ الْحَافِي. I then realised that it was his sister. When I related this to my father, he remarked, “Only the sister of Bishr بِشْرُ الْحَافِي could have asked such a question.”

Bishr Al-Ḥāfiٰ would remark, “I learnt abstinence from my sister because she would not eat of anything which was made by the hand of man.”¹



Righteous men are often products of homes wherein righteous women provide spiritual guidance and motivation.



Where is Allāh ﷺ?

Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar was one day travelling through one of the outlying areas of Madīnah with his companions. As they stopped for meals, a shepherd passed by. Ibn ‘Umar invited him to join them, but the shepherd refused, saying, “I am fasting.”

Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما remarked in amazement, "How is it that you are fasting in such scorching heat and in such mountainous terrain, while tending to sheep?"

The shepherd replied, "I am hastening towards good during my days of free time."

Ibn 'Umar رض decided to test his level of piety and asked, "Will you sell us a sheep from your flock? We will pay you its full price and also give you a portion of its meat with which you may break your fast."

The shepherd replied, "These sheep do not belong to me."

Ibn 'Umar رض said, "What can your master do if you inform him that one of the sheep was eaten by a wolf?"

The shepherd turned away and pointed his finger towards the heavens, saying, "And where is Allāh ﷺ?"

¹ Sifatus Safwah, p 513; Al-Wāfi Bil Wafayāt

Ibn 'Umar رض was extremely pleased with the shepherd and, upon reaching Madīnah, sent a request to his master to sell the slave and the flock to him. The master agreed. Ibn 'Umar رض granted the shepherd his freedom and gave him the flock of sheep as a gift.¹



Honesty draws divine rewards.



Qur'ān Transforms a Robber

Aṣmaī narrates : I was once travelling through desert terrain teaching the Qur'ān, when I was confronted by a bedouin highway robber. Brandishing a sword, he tugged at my clothing and asked, "O city-dweller, why have you come into the desert?"

I replied, "I have come to teach the Qur'ān to others."

He asked, "What is the Qur'ān?"

I replied, "It is the Speech of Allāh عز وجل."

He asked, "And does Allāh have speech?"

I replied, "Yes."

He requested, "Can you recite for me a portion of it?"

I recited,

وَفِي السَّمَاوَاتِ رِزْقٌ كُمْ وَمَا تُوَدُّونَ

"And in the heavens is your sustenance, and that which you are promised." (Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, verse 22)

¹ *Sifatuṣ Ṣafwah*, p 365; *Shu'bul ȳmān*

After hearing these words, he threw down his sword and remarked, “I seek Allāh’s ﷺ forgiveness! I am slogging for my sustenance on earth when it is already stipulated in the heavens!”

Aşmaī continues : I noticed him a year later making Țawāf of the Ka'bah and asked, “Are you not the same person who met me in the desert?”

“Yes,” he replied, and recited the verse,

فَوَرَبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْكُمْ تَنْطَقُونَ

“By the Lord of the heavens and the earth, it is the truth just as it is the truth that you can speak.” (Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, verse 23)

He then began to cry and said, “And who will take refuge in this oath.” He continued repeating these words, until he fell down and passed away.¹



The verses of the Qur'ān can reform and touch the hearts of the worst of men, provided they are receptive to the truth of its message.



Iblīs Overpowers a Pious Man

There was a pious man who had worshipped Allāh ﷺ for a long period of time. One day, he was informed that a group of people were worshipping a particular tree. This angered him and he set out with an axe to chop it down. Enroute, Iblīs appeared before him in the form of an old man and asked, “Where are you going?”

¹ Ṣifatus Ṣafwah, p 903

The man answered, "I am on my way to chop down a particular tree that people are worshipping."

Iblīs enquired, "What have you got to do with this? Have you left aside your worship and engaged yourself in a matter that has nothing to do with you?"

The man answered, "What I am about to do is also a form of worship."

But Iblīs remarked, "I will not allow you to chop down the tree." He then attacked the pious man, but the latter overpowered him, threw him to the ground and sat upon his chest.

Iblīs begged, "Please let me go so that I can discuss the matter with you." So, the pious man let him go.

Iblīs then said, "Allāh has not made this compulsory upon you. Has Allāh made you a prophet?"

"No," replied the pious man.

Iblīs continued, "There is no sin upon you if those people are worshipping the tree. You should remain engrossed in your own worship. Allāh has many prophets at His disposal. If He so willed, He would have sent one of them to the people, ordering them to chop down the tree."

But, the pious man was not convinced. "I must chop down the tree," he insisted.

Again Iblīs tried to resist and again the pious man overpowered him, threw him to the ground and sat upon his chest.

Iblīs now realised that he could not overpower the pious man and said, "Listen to me carefully! There is another matter which is far more important to you."

The pious man asked, "And what is that?"

Iblīs replied, "Let me go and I will tell you."

So, the pious man let him go and Iblīs said, "You are a poor man and a burden upon your brothers and neighbours who care for you. Would you not like to repay some of their kindness to you? Would you not like to become rich and independent?"

"Yes," replied the pious man.

Iblīs then said, "Abandon your intention of chopping down the tree and, in return, I will place two dinārs next to your pillow every night.

When you awake, you can do with them as you please. You may spend them on yourself and your family or give them as charity to your needy brothers. This will be far more beneficial to you and the Muslims than chopping down a tree that will neither harm those who are worshipping it, nor benefit the Muslims in any way."

This got the pious man thinking: "This old man is right. I am not a prophet who has been appointed by Allāh ﷺ to chop down this tree. I will not be sinning if I leave the tree as it is. What harm will come to those who believe in one Allāh ﷺ if the tree is left alone? In fact, if I accept the money in place of chopping the tree, it will be of greater benefit to the people."

Iblīs took an oath to fulfil his promise and the pious man returned to his place of worship, where he spent the night. The next morning, he found two dinārs next to his pillow and took them for himself. The same thing happened the following day. On the third morning, he did not find any dinārs and was infuriated. He picked up his axe and again set out to chop down the tree, saying to himself, "If I have been deprived of worldly benefit, why should I also be deprived of benefit in the Hereafter?"

Again Iblīs came to him in the form of an old man and asked, "Where are you going?"

The man replied, "I am going to chop down that tree."

Iblīs replied, "You will never be able to do so!"

The pious man then pounced upon Iblīs and thought that he would overpower him as before, but this was not the case now. Iblīs threw him to the ground almost as if he were a sparrow in his hands. Iblīs now sat upon his chest and threatened, "You must abandon this intention of yours forever or I will kill you."

The pious man looked at him helplessly and acknowledged, "You have defeated me. Please let me go and explain to me why I managed to overpower you the first time around and why you have overpowered me now."

Iblīs explained, "Initially, your anger was for the pleasure of Allāh and your intention was for success in the Hereafter, so Allāh helped you to overpower me. This time, however, your anger was for your own

benefit and your intention was for worldly motives, so Allāh allowed me to overpower you.”¹



A man with a pure and sincere intention has the help of Allāh ﷺ, while a man with ulterior motives is easily overpowered by Shaiṭān and his desires.



Quest for Ḥalāl Sustenance

Revealing the Defect

One day Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ sent some clothing that had defects therein to his business partner. He instructed that it should be sold and the defects disclosed at the time of sale. The partner sold the goods, but forgot to mention the defects. The purchaser took possession of the clothing and left, assuming that it was of perfect quality. When Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ heard about this, he gave the entire proceeds of the transaction, which totalled thirty-thousand dirhams, in charity.²

Difference in Quality

Maymūnah bint Al-Aqra' رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ was a virtuous woman. She used to spin thread and then sell it to a cotton dealer. One day, she came to the cotton dealer and advised him, “When you sell this cotton, say to the prospective buyer that I had been fasting at times and my hands may have been loose, resulting in less cotton being spun.”

1 Ihyā' 'Ulūmuddīn, vol 4, p 377; Qūtul Qulūb

2 Al-Khairātul Ḥisān Fī Manāqibil Imām Al-Aa'ẓam Abī Ḥanīfah An-Nu'mān, p 44

Saying this, she left. After a while, she returned and said, "Please return my cotton. I fear that you may not reveal the flaw to the buyer."¹

Wise Advice

The devout Muāzah Al-‘Adawiyyah رض, once advised the young girl she had breast-fed, "Do not destroy my foster relationship with you by consuming ḥarām food. I went through great pains while breast-feeding you to ensure that I did not consume ḥarām food. You should similarly endeavour to eat only ḥalāl food so that you will be able to serve your Master, Allāh عز, and be contented with His decisions."²

A Doubtful Sip of Milk

‘Abdul Malik ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥaywah Al-Juwainī رض, was an outstanding scholar of his time. Throughout his infancy and childhood, his parents meticulously ensured that he consumed only ḥalāl food. Once he was engaged in a debate, and stuttered. When asked the reason for the disparity from his usual smooth and eloquent manner of speech, he explained, "This is the result of having one sip of breast milk which I was not supposed to drink."

When questioned further, he continued, "My mother was preparing food for the family. I was a suckling infant at the time and began to cry. A slave-girl, who lived with our neighbour, happened to be at our home at that time and gave me a sip or two of her milk. My father entered the home and immediately disapproved of her action, saying, "She is not of our household and cannot feed our baby, as her master has not given permission for this."

He then turned me onto my belly and made me throw up the milk I had drunk from her. However, this slight stutter in my speech today was a consequence of the milk I had swallowed."³

Such was the concern for ḥalāl food, that the father was disturbed about the doubtful source of a little milk consumed by his innocent child.

1 Tabaqātul Ḥanābilah, vol 2, p 579

2 Ṣifatuṣ Ṣafwah, p 710

3 Tabaqātush Shāfi‘iyah Al-Kubrā, vol 5, p 168



Consumption of ḥalāl sustenance is the basis of faith and good actions.



Imām Shāfi‘ī’s Unique Durūd¹

Ibn Bunān Al-Āṣbahānī ﷺ says: I once saw Nabī ﷺ in a dream and asked, “O Nabī of Allāh ﷺ, have you given any special honour to Muḥammad ibn Idrīs Ash-Shāfi‘ī ﷺ?”

Nabī ﷺ replied, “Yes, I have asked Allāh ﷺ to excuse him from reckoning on the day of Qiyyāmah.”

I asked, “What was the reason for this?”

Nabī ﷺ replied, “He recited a unique form of *durūd* upon me.”

I asked, “What *durūd* did he recite?”

Nabī ﷺ answered, “He would say :

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ كُلَّمَا ذَكَرْتَهُ الْذَّاكِرُونَ وَ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ كُلَّمَا غَفَلَ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِ
الْغَافِلُونَ

O Allāh ﷺ, bestow Your mercy and blessings upon Muḥammad ﷺ whenever he is remembered and bestow Your mercy and blessings upon Muḥammad ﷺ whenever he is not remembered.”²



Durūd is a very special form of worship. Nabī ﷺ said,

1 A form of salutation sent upon Nabī ﷺ.

2 Ṣifatuṣ Ṣafwah, p 395

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ وَاحِدَةً صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَشْرًا

“Allāh ﷺ grants tenfold reward to a person who sends durūd upon me once.”¹



Focus of the Righteous

Thrown Into a Den of Wild Beasts

Bunān ibn Muḥammad ibn Hamdān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, grew up in Baghdaḍ, where he studied Ḥadīth and later settled in Egypt. Here, he encouraged the leader, Ibn Tūlūn, towards good deeds. Ibn Tūlūn ordered that he be thrown into a den of wild beasts. Instead of harming him, the beasts smelt him and left him alone. When he was removed from the den, he was questioned, “What were you thinking of when those wild beasts were smelling you?”

He replied, “I was pondering over the question of the leftover water and saliva of wild beasts being pure or not?”²

Ships on the Water

‘Abdul Aa’lā ibn Ziyād Al-Aslamī narrates : One day, I noticed Dāwūd Ṭāi رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, standing close to the bank of the Euphrates River with an expression of amazement on his face.

I asked, “Why are you standing here like this?”

He replied, “I am looking at the ships and how they are sailing on the water, subservient to the command of Allāh ﷺ.”³

The Qur’ān describes ships on the ocean as follows:

1 Muslim

2 Ṣifatuṣ Ṣafwah, p 480

3 Ḥilyatul Awliyā', p 356

اللَّهُ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لِتَجْرِيَ الْفَلَكَ فِيهِ يَأْمُرُهُ وَلَتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

“It is Allāh Who has subjected the sea to you, so that ships may sail through it by His command and that you may seek of His bounty and that you may be grateful.” (Sūrah Al-Jāthiyah, verse 12)

Waves of the Ocean

Masma' ibn 'Āsim رضي الله عنه narrates : I spent the night on the seashore with my companions, 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Salmān رضي الله عنه, Kilāb ibn Jarā' رضي الله عنه and Salmān Al-Aa'raj رضي الله عنه. Kilāb ibn Jarā' رضي الله عنه began to weep to such an extent, that I began to fear that he would pass away. Soon my other two companions also began to weep. Out of compassion for them, I too, could not hold back my tears. The next day, I asked 'Abdul 'Azīz رضي الله عنه why he had wept that night.

He replied, “I looked at the waves of the ocean breaking, and it reminded me about the layers of the fire of hell and the sound it would emit.”

When I questioned my other two companions, they replied in a similar vein.¹

The Qur'ān describes hell-fire as follows:

إِذَا رَأَتْهُمْ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَعْيِظًا وَزَفِيرًا

When it (hell-fire) sees them from afar, they will hear its raging and roaring. (Sūrah Al-Furqān, verse 12)



A man who fears Allāh ﷺ views the world through eyes of special insight and understanding.



¹ Ṣifatuṣ Ṣafwah, p 693



An Evil Glance

A man by the name of 'Abdah ibn 'Abdur Raḥīm participated in many military campaigns against the Romans. On one particular campaign, when the Mujāhidīn had surrounded a Roman city, his gaze fell upon a woman in a fortress. He was infatuated by her beauty and sent her a message, asking how he could reach her.

She replied, "When you have conquered the city, you may come up to me in the fortress."

He did as she had advised. From then onwards, he spent all his time with her, instead of the Muslim army. The Muslims were deeply distressed by this. Eventually, they went up to the fortress and asked him, "What has happened to the Qur'ān you knew? What has happened to your knowledge? What has happened to your fasting? What has happened to your jihād? What has happened to your Ṣalāh?"

He replied, "I have forgotten the entire Qur'ān, except these two verses,

رَبِّمَا يَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ كَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ذَرُوهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَتَمَّتُوا وَيُلْهُهُمُ الْأَمْلُ
فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

"Often will those who disbelieve wish that they were Muslims. Leave them to eat and enjoy, and let them be preoccupied with false hope.

Soon they will come to know!" (Sūrah Al-Hijr, verse 2-3)

I now also have wealth and children amongst these people."¹

¹ Al-Bidāyah Wan-Nihāyah, p 640



Shaiṭān has led many pious men towards destruction by enticing them to cast a single lustful gaze.



A Mother's Du'ā' is Guaranteed Acceptance

Awoman came to Baqī ibn Makhlad رضي الله عنه and said, “The Romans have taken my son as prisoner and I do not possess sufficient money as ransom to have him released. I request your assistance in this regard. His capture has distressed me to the extent that my days and nights are without sleep and contentment.”

The learned man replied, “Allow me to ponder over the matter.” He then lowered his head for a while and made a du'ā' according to her request.

After a few days, the woman returned with her son and began making du'ā' for the pious man. She remarked, “He has returned safe and sound. Allow him to explain his ordeal.”

The son explained, “I was captured by a Roman king, together with a number of other prisoners. One of the king's men would lead us out into the desert every day, where we were forced to do hard labour. In the evening, we would return bound in chains. One day, as we were returning, the chains fell from my feet. (The boy mentioned the day and time of the incident and it coincided with the moment when his mother had approached the learned man, who had lowered his head in prayer).

The guard began to scream at me, “Why did you break the chains?”

“I did not. They fell from my feet involuntarily,” I pleaded.

They immediately called for a blacksmith and had the chains fixed to my feet. After a few steps, the chains again fell from my feet. They were amazed and called their priests, who asked me, “Is your mother alive?”

“Yes,” I replied.

They explained, “Her prayer in your favour has been accepted. Allāh ﷺ has freed you. It is not possible for us to imprison you any longer.” They freed me and sent an escort to accompany me until we reached Muslim territory.”¹



The du‘ā’ of a mother for her progeny is guaranteed acceptance.



Intelligent Women

Wise Woman Advises a Scholar

Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ﷺ explains: My wife passed away and Muḥammad ibn Ka'b Al-Qurazī ﷺ came to visit me to express his condolences. He related to me that amongst the Banī Isrā'īl, there was a pious and learned scholar. He had a wife whom he loved very much. When she passed away, he was completely overcome with grief and sorrow. He shut himself up in his home and stopped all forms of social interaction. A woman heard about this, and went to his house, saying, “I have a question to ask and I need to address it to him personally.” She insisted, until those who were present left, and she was left alone at his door.

The pious man was accordingly informed of her insistence on meeting him. He allowed her to enter.

“What would you like to ask?” he enquired.

¹ Tārīkh Dimishq, vol 10, p 355

She replied, "I borrowed some jewellery from my neighbour and wore it for a lengthy period of time. If that woman now wants it back, should I return it?"

He replied, "Yes, by Allāh."

"But it has been in my possession for a long time!" she remarked.

He explained, "Since she borrowed it to you for such a long time, you have a greater responsibility of returning it."

She then said, "May Allāh ﷺ have mercy upon you! Why are you so sorrowful over that which Allāh ﷺ borrowed to you and then took back from you? He has a greater right over it than you."

The scholar reflected over her wise words and Allāh ﷺ granted him the good fortune of benefiting therefrom.¹

Silenced

An unpleasant looking woman was once standing at the door of a perfume seller, who had the habit of mocking at others. When he saw her, he quoted the verse from the Qur'ān,

وَإِذَا الْوُحْشُونَ حُشِرَتْ

"And when the wild beasts are gathered together."

(Sūrah At-Takwīr, verse 5)

She responded with another verse of the Qur'ān,

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ

"And he presents for Us a parable but forgets his own creation."

(Sūrah Yāsīn, verse 78)²

A Cunning Woman

There was a wealthy man who lived with his family in Ahwāz. One day, he travelled to Baṣrah, where he married another woman. He would visit her once or twice a year. This woman from Baṣrah had an uncle

1 Muwaṭṭa Imām Mālik

2 Al-Adhkiyā', p 149

who would often ask her husband to write letters on his behalf. One day, coincidentally, his letter ended up in the hands of his wife in Ahwāz, who came to know of his second marriage.

She, accordingly, devised a plan. By means of a relative in Başrah, she had a letter dispatched to her husband, which read, “Your wife has passed away. Come immediately!”

When he read the letter, he began preparing to leave for Başrah. His wife said to him, “It appears as if your heart is attached elsewhere. I think that you have another wife in Başrah.”

The husband replied, “Allāh forbid!”

She remarked, “This does not satisfy me. I will only be convinced if you take an oath here and now that every woman besides me, wherever she may be, is divorced from you.”

The man took the oath thinking that his wife in Başrah had already passed away.

She then explained, “There is no need for you to go to Başrah any longer. You have just divorced your wife there. She was alive and well all along.”¹

A Wise Reply

‘Imrān ibn Ḥaṭṭān was short and unattractive in appearance. His wife, on the other hand, was extremely beautiful. He would often admire her beauty.

One day, she asked, “Why do you stare at me like this?”

He replied, “You are very beautiful.”

To this, she exclaimed, “Glad tidings! Both of us will enter Jannah.”

“How do you know this?” he asked.

She replied, “You have been rewarded with somebody like me and you have been grateful. On the other hand, I have been severely tested by the likes of you and I have been patient. The grateful and the patient will both enter Jannah.”²

1 Al-Adhkiyā’ p 227

2 Al-Adhkiyā’, p 217



The spiritual insight and actions of virtuous women have a great impact upon the lives of their families and communities.



The Evil of Carrying Tales

Hammād ibn Salimah narrates : A man decided to purchase a particular slave. The owner agreed to sell him the slave, but warned, “He has one evil quality: he carries tales.” The buyer regarded this as a minor evil and agreed to the purchase.

After the slave had been in his new employment for some time, he approached his master’s wife and said, “Your husband does not love you. He is silently contemplating a second marriage. Would you like him to abandon his quest for a second wife and love you exclusively?”

“Yes,” she replied.

He continued, “Do as I tell you. Take a razor and, when he is asleep at night, cut a few strands of hair from his beard. Bring them to me so that I may cast a spell upon them which will reignite his love for you.”

When he was convinced that he had sowed the seeds of doubt in her heart, he approached her husband and said, “Your wife is an evil woman. She pretends to be honest, but she has befriended another man and is waiting for an opportunity to kill you. Would you like to see proof of this?”

The husband replied, “Yes.”

The slave advised, “Tonight, pretend to be asleep. She will approach you with a razor and attempt to take your life.”

That night, the husband pretended as if he was asleep. His wife approached him with a razor to cut some strands of hair from his beard. He assumed that his slave had spoken the truth and thought that she was

about to kill him. He quickly overpowered her, snatched the razor from her hands and killed her. News of this spread to her family, who came and took his life. As a result, the tribes of the husband and wife became involved in a bitter conflict.¹



Carrying tales, gossiping and backbiting destroys families and communities by sowing hatred and animosity.



The source of information should be verified before dissemination. The Qur'ān instructs:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَيْأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوْرَا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوْرَا^١
عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِيْمِنَ

“O you who believe! If an evil person comes to you with any news, verify it, or else you may harm people in ignorance, and thereafter you would become regretful over what you have done.” (Sūrah Al-Ḥujrāt, verse 6)



Safe-guarding the Tongue

Two great reciters of the Qur'ān, Imām Yazīdī رضي الله عنه and Imām Kisā'i رضي الله عنه, were once in the presence of Hārun Ar-Rashīd, when the time for Ṣalāh arrived. They decided that Imām Kisā'i رضي الله عنه

¹ Iḥyā' 'Ulūmuddīn, vol 3, p 158; Rawḍatul 'Uqalā'; Al-Kabā'ir

would lead the Ṣalāh. During the course of his recitation of Sūrah Kāfirūn, he stammered for a moment. When they had completed, Imām Yazīdī رضي الله عنه remarked, “The Qāri of Kūfa stammered while reciting a simple Sūrah like this!”

When the time arrived for the next Ṣalāh, Imām Yazīdī رضي الله عنه was ushered forward to lead the prayer. During his recitation of Sūrah Fātiḥah, he stammered. When he had completed, he remarked,

احفظ لسانك لا يقول قبل إن البلاء موكل بالمنطق

“Guard your tongue so that it does not speak a word that will cause
you distress,
Distress is the result of speech.”¹



One who is hasty to pass remarks at the mistakes of others, is often put to shame by his own mistakes.



Unite Against a Common Enemy

At the time when Muṣ'ab ibn Zubair was at war with 'Abdul Malik, a number of Roman leaders approached the Roman king and suggested, “The Arabs are presently in conflict amongst themselves and this is an ideal opportunity for us to attack them in their own territory.”

But, the king disagreed with their suggestion. To prove his point, he called for two dogs and prompted them to fight each other. He then

¹ Tārīkh Baghdaḍ, vol 13, p 351; Tārīkhul Islam Dhahabī

called for a fox and separated the two dogs. When the dogs saw the fox, they left each other and attacked the fox instead.

The king then explained to the leaders, “This is precisely our condition with the Muslims.” The leaders understood his point and abandoned their idea.¹



Opposing Muslim groups should settle their differences cordially, and unite when faced by a common enemy.



Lesson from a Blind Cat

Abul Ḥasan Tāhir ibn Aḥmad ibn Bābshādh was an Egyptian scholar of Arabic grammar, who authored many great works. He earned his living by perusing and correcting manuscripts and books.

One day, as he was partaking of a meal with his companions on the upper floor of a building, they noticed a stray cat close by. They cast a morsel of food towards it, which it placed in its mouth and disappeared. After a short while, it returned. They cast another morsel towards it, which it again placed in its mouth and disappeared. Again it returned. When this happened a number of times, they realised that it could not

¹ 'Uyūnul Akhbār, vol 2, p 116. This was proven to be exactly true in the case of Ka'b ibn Mālik ﷺ and the trial of faith that he went through. When the entire Muslim community of Madīnah cut off relations and communication with him and his two companions under the instruction of Nabī ﷺ, he was approached by the king of Ghassān. Ka'b ﷺ says that he was walking in the streets of Madīnah when a messenger came to him with a letter. It read, “News has reached us that your companion has been harsh towards you, whereas Allāh ﷺ has not made your abode one of disgrace and destruction. Unite with us and we will assist and comfort you.” After reading the letter Ka'b ﷺ realised that this was another trial of his faith and he cast the letter into a fire.

have eaten all that food by itself. They decided to investigate what was happening, and followed the cat. It scaled a wall from the top floor and then entered a deserted house through an opening. In the house was a blind cat. Every morsel of food that it had taken, had been placed before the blind cat, which was now eating therefrom.

The group was astonished at the spectacle and Ibn Bābshādh remarked, "When Allāh ﷺ has utilised this cat to feed another blind animal, and He has not deprived it of sustenance, how can He ever cause me to starve?" He was deeply touched by the experience and, thereafter, preferred to live a life of simplicity until his demise.¹



Allāh ﷺ utilises remarkable avenues to provide sustenance to all His creation.



Conquest of Istanbul

Constantinople, or Istanbul as it is known today, is a unique city as far as its history and location is concerned. Historically, it was the capital of the Roman Empire for eleven centuries and its culture dominated the old world. The principal church of Eastern Christianity was situated here. Its pivotal political and religious position caused the entire Christian World to rally to its defence at times of conflict. Geographically, it has a natural harbour bordered by the ocean on three sides and it is the only city in the world which is considered to be both in Europe and Asia.² The straits of Bosphorus divide the city into two, with one end merging into the Black Sea, and the other into the Sea of Marmara. A tiny branch

1 Wafayātul Aa'yān, vol 2, p 516

2 Refer to Figure 1 for a map of Istanbul.

of the Bosphorus to the west forms the 'Golden Horn', which is the only area of entry into the city.

Nabī ﷺ had prophesied the downfall of Istanbul at the hands of the Muslims when he said :

لَتَفْتَحَنَّ الْقُسْطَنْطَنْطِينِيَّةَ فَلَنَعِمَ الْأَمِيرُهَا وَلَنَعِمَ الْجَنِيشُ ذَلِكَ الْجَنِيشُ

"You will certainly conquer Constantinople. Fortunate will be the leader and fortunate will be the army that accomplishes this."¹

For eight centuries, the conquest of Constantinople remained a dream for the Muslims. Many attempts were made to conquer it, the first by Mu'āwiyah ibn Abū Sufyān ﷺ, during the khilāfah of 'Alī ﷺ, but none were successful. The strategic strength of its location and its mountainous terrain made it virtually impenetrable.

The honour and glad tidings mentioned by Nabī ﷺ fell onto a young Muslim commander by the name of Sultān Muhammād Al-Fātih² ﷺ, the seventh ruler of the Ottoman Empire. At the tender age of twenty-two he assumed the position of leadership.

Prayer for Victory

When Sultān Muhammād Al-Fātih² ﷺ decided to conquer Constantinople, he sent his minister Aḥmad Bāshā ibn Waliyuddīn to two pious men of the time, Shaikh Āq Shamsuddīn ﷺ and Shaikh Āq Bek ﷺ, to request their company as the army proceeded for battle. They both agreed. Shaikh Shamsuddīn ﷺ gave him the glad tidings of victory and specified the exact day, time and place of entry into the city. The Sultān was accordingly informed.

When the day arrived, and there was no sign of victory, the minister began to doubt. He decided to visit the Shaikh. On arrival at the Shaikh's tent, he was refused entry according to the Shaikh's instructions. The minister lifted a portion of the tent and found the Shaikh with his forehead on the ground, humbly crying and beseeching Allāh ﷺ. After

1 Musnad Ahmad

2 Al-Fātih literally means 'the conqueror.'

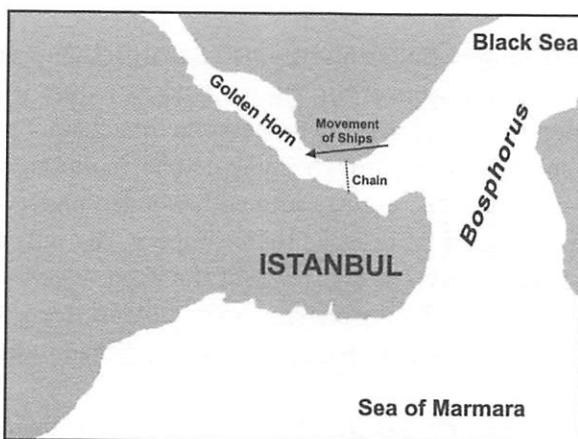
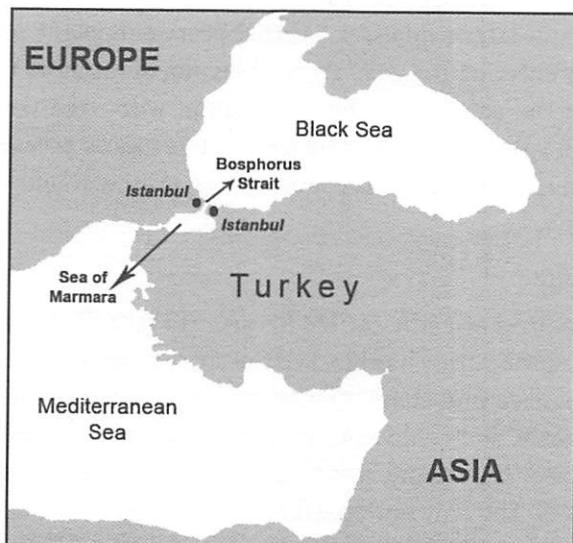


Figure 1: Maps of Istanbul showing the path taken by Sultān Muḥammad Al-Fātiḥ to bypass the iron chain which blocked the entrance of the Golden Horn.

a few moments, he raised his head and stood up, saying, “All praise be to Allāh ﷺ, Who granted us the ability to conquer the city.”

The minister later explained, “At that precise moment, I noticed the Muslim army entering the city.” By the blessing of his du‘ā, the Muslims succeeded in the conquest. When the Sultān witnessed the fulfilment of the Shaikh’s prediction, he remarked, “I am more pleased with the presence of a man of this calibre amongst us, than with our conquest of Constantinople.”

Military Genius

Sultān Muḥammad Al-Fātiḥ ﷺ led his army to face the Romans in April 1453. The Byzantine army had blocked the entry through the Golden Horn by using a massive iron chain. The Muslim navy was therefore confined to the Bosphorus and could not enter the city port. The only way they could overpower the enemy, was by a land invasion, but this was a near impossible task. The only option left to him, was for a portion of his navy to attack from the port side of the city through the Golden Horn. But, this was a formidable task, as the chain at the mouth of the Golden Horn blocked the opening and the Byzantine ships were in position to repel any invasion.

After much thought, Sultān Muḥammad ﷺ struck upon an ingenious plan. He decided that some of his ships should be moved over the land into the Golden Horn, and thereby by-pass the iron chain. But, the route to the Golden Horn was through cumbersome mountainous terrain. The Muslim army laid the entire route with wooden planks, which had been lined with oil and fat to make them slippery. The sails of the ships were also opened to draw the assistance of the wind. Seventy ships were then transferred from the Bosphorus to the Golden Horn. This daring feat, unique in the annals of history, was accomplished to perfection in a single night.

The Byzantine army was shocked at the sudden appearance of the Muslim ships before their eyes. The entrance of the Muslim navy into the Golden Horn now opened the siege to the city from all sides. The inhabitants were not prepared for combat from the sea entrance of the city, as they had concentrated most of their efforts at the remaining

three fronts. After fierce fighting from both sides, the Muslims entered the city triumphantly.

Even non-Muslim historians, like Edward Gibbon, expressed their amazement at this military strategy, calling it a “miracle.”¹

Shaikh Advises Military Commander

After the conquest, the Sultān approached the Shaikh in his tent. The Shaikh was lying down and did not stand up to receive him. The Sultān kissed his hand and said, “I have come with a request.”

“What is it?” the Shaikh asked.

“I would like to speak to you in privacy,” replied the Sultān.

The Shaikh refused. The Sultān repeated the request a number of times, but the Shaikh was adamant.

Finally, the Sultān angrily said, “When any of the Turks request your counsel in privacy, you allow them the privilege without any fuss, but in my case you refuse!”

The Shaikh explained, “You will find a certain comfort in privacy, which will cause you to lose the importance of your position as a leader. This will bring harm to the affairs of the state, which will in turn draw the anger of Allāh ﷺ upon us.” The Shaikh then advised the Sultān regarding the steps he should take.

As he left the tent, he complained to his companion, “The Shaikh did not rise to honour me.”

His companion explained, “Perhaps he has noticed some pride that has entered your heart due to the conquest of the city, which was denied to many great leaders before you. The Shaikh desires to purify you from this pride.”

Later that night, the Sultān called for the Shaikh. He arrived and the Sultān’s companions rose and kissed his hand out of respect. The Sultān did likewise and embraced him. The Shaikh pressed the Sultān close to his chest to such an extent, that the Sultān began to tremble out of awe. The Sultān later explained that he had entertained some evil thoughts about the Shaikh, but they vanished when the Shaikh embraced him.

¹ Jahāne Dīdā p 325; Ad Dawlatul ‘Uthmāniyyah Minal Juz-ith Thānī Min Kitāb al-Futūhātul Islamiyyah, p 134

The Sultān remained seated respectfully with the Shaikh until Fajr, which they performed together.¹

An Unusual Request

Abū Ayyūb Al-Anṣārī ﷺ was that fortunate Ṣahābī in whose home Nabī ﷺ stayed for one month upon his arrival in Madīnah. All the Ṣahābah ﷺ of Madīnah anxiously invited Nabī ﷺ to stay with them, but he refused, saying, "Allow my camel to proceed, as it has been commanded." It finally stopped close to the home of Abū Ayyūb Al-Anṣārī ﷺ. He stayed on the top floor with his family and Nabī ﷺ at the bottom.

Abū Ayyūb Al-Anṣārī ﷺ participated in the battle of Badr and many battles thereafter. He passed away and was buried beneath the walls of Constantinople. He fell ill just before his demise and Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah, who was the commander of the army, came to visit him. When Abū Ayyūb Al-Anṣārī ﷺ was asked if he needed anything, he replied, "I have one request. When I pass away, take my body as far as you can into enemy territory and bury me there." His request was accordingly fulfilled.

A Blessed Grave

Sultān Muḥammad ﷺ requested the Shaikh to identify the grave of Abū Ayyūb Al-Anṣārī ﷺ, as he had read in the books of history that his grave was close to the walls of the city of Constantinople. The Shaikh proceeded in a particular direction, saying, "I notice a spiritual glow emanating from that area."

When the Shaikh returned, he declared, "I came into contact with the soul of Abū Ayyūb Al-Anṣārī ﷺ and he congratulated me with the words, "May Allāh ﷺ reward your efforts as you people have emancipated me from the darkness of the land of disbelief." "

The Sultān replied, "I believe you, however, I would like to see a sign which will put my heart at rest."

The Shaikh advised, "Dig up this portion of land. After digging two arms' length, you will find a piece of marble with an inscription." They

1 Al-Badrūt Ṭāli' Bi Maḥasini Mim Ba'dil Qarnis Sābi', vol 2, p 166

did as advised and found the marble. The writing was deciphered and the area was confirmed to be the grave of Abū Ayyūb Al-Anṣārī رض.¹



The religious spirit and enthusiasm of the early Muslims encouraged them to strive in the path of Allāh ﷻ with amazing conviction.

Many Muslim commanders, like Ṣalāḥuddīn Ayyūbī رَض and others, requested the company and advice of spiritual guides throughout their campaigns, as they realised that spiritual guidance was essential, even in times of war.



Words that Conquered

Conversion of the Tartars

Tughluq Timur Khān was the king of the Kashgar. He was one of those Mongol Tartar rulers who accepted Islam after coming into contact with Shaikh Jamāluddīn رَض, a pious man of Persian descent. The Mongol Tartars disliked the Persians, regarding them as an inferior race. One day, the king was on a hunting expedition and, coincidentally, the Shaikh was on a journey with a number of his companions in the same area. They happened to cross an area which had been cordoned off for the king. The king was annoyed when he heard of this and regarded it as a bad omen for his expedition. He ordered that they be brought to him with their hands and feet bound in chains.

In anger, he asked them, “How dare you enter this land?”

¹ Al-Badrūt Ṭālī' Bi Maḥasini Mim Ba'dil Qarnis Sābi', vol 2, p 167; Al-Isābah, Al-Iṣṭī'āb

They replied, "We are strangers here. We had no idea that we were trespassing. We beg your pardon in this regard."

When the king realised that they were Persians, he pointed to his dog and exclaimed, "Which of you is more honoured, you or my dog?"

In the face of such an insult, the wise Shaikh replied calmly, "This question cannot be answered at this time."

The king asked, "When can it be answered?"

The Shaikh replied, "The matter depends upon my end result. If I leave this world with Īmān, I am more honourable than your dog, otherwise your dog will be better than me."

The reply struck the king and he enquired what Īmān was. The Shaikh then explained the glorious teachings of Islam with such enthusiasm and conviction, that the heart of the king melted. He similarly painted such an unpleasant picture of disbelief, that the king was convinced of his spiritual weakness.

He said, "If I were to accept Islam immediately, I would not be able to convince my subjects to do likewise. Bear with me a little. Come to me again when news reaches you that I have become the leader of the kingdom of my forefathers."

The empire was split into a number of petty kingdoms at that time and it was many years before Tugluq Timur succeeded in uniting the empire. In the meantime, Shaikh Jamāluddīn ﷺ returned to his home, where he fell seriously ill. Close to his end, he advised his son Rashīduddīn ﷺ, "Tugluq Timur will one day become a great king. At that time, convey my greetings to him and courageously remind him of the promise he had made to me."

Not long thereafter, Tugluq Timur ascended the throne and Rashīduddīn ﷺ proceeded to meet him in order to fulfil the last wishes of his late father. Despite all his efforts, he could not gain an audience with the king. Finally, he devised a plan. Early one morning, he began to call out the Adhān, close to the king's tent. The king was enraged at having his sleep disturbed and ordered the caller to be brought to him. This gave Rashīduddīn ﷺ the opportunity to deliver his father's message.

Tugluq Timur did not forget his promise, saying, “I have been pondering about this eversince I assumed power, but the man who introduced me to Islam, never arrived.” He then accepted Islam.

In a short space of time, the light of Islam began to spread rapidly through the ranks of the Tartars and, a once barbaric nation, was guided to the path of righteousness.¹

Final Words of a Martyr

Nabī ﷺ once sent a group of seventy learned Ṣahābah ﷺ from the Ansār to the tribe of Banū Āmir to invite them to Islam. During the course of their journey, they were attacked and put to the sword. Jabbār ibn Salmah, a non-Muslim at the time, killed Āmir ibn Fuhairah ﷺ.

He explains what happened on that day, “A factor that drew me towards Islam was when I stabbed a man between his shoulders with a spear. I noticed the spear, as he removed it from his chest, and heard him utter the following words, ‘I have been successful, by the Lord of the Ka’bah.’ I began to wonder, ‘What success is he referring to? Did I not just kill him?’ I decided to ask the Muslims about this, and was informed, “He meant that he had achieved martyrdom and paradise.”²



A few inspiring words from the lips of a righteous Muslim can be a means of guidance for entire nations.



1 Al-Qarnul Khāmis Min ‘Ashrīl Hijrī Al-Jadīd, p 23

2 Bukhārī; Fathul Bārī



Frightful Outcome of Jealousy

A certain king was once approached by a man who advised, “Be kind in rewarding one who does good, and ignore an evil man because his wrong deeds will suffice as his punishment.”

Another courtier became envious of the man and his words. He privately approached the king, saying, “The man who uttered those words to you thinks that you have bad breath.”

“How do you know this?” asked the king.

The courtier advised, “Call him close to you and you will notice him placing his hand over his nose.”

The king ordered the courtier to leave so that he could investigate the matter. The courtier then invited the man to his home and placed before him a meal spiced with garlic. After they had dined, the man left to present himself at the court of the king as he would normally do. The king requested him to come closer and he placed his hand over his mouth, so that the king would not smell the garlic from the meal he had just eaten. The king was now convinced of the truth of his courtier’s accusation.

It was the custom of the king that he would only write a note with his own hand when he wanted to give a reward. So, he wrote a note addressed to one of his governors with the command : “When the carrier of this note reaches you, kill him, and send his dead body to me.”

The man took the note and left. On his way, he met the envious courtier, who asked, “What note is that?”

“It is a note in the king’s handwriting with an order of a reward which I am to receive,” the man answered.

“Please hand the note to me, and I will deliver it on your behalf,” the courtier said.

“Fine,” replied the man and handed it over.

The courtier took it and proceeded to the governor. When the governor read it, he exclaimed, “The note commands that I should behead you.”

“But the note does not belong to me. I beg you in the Name of Allāh ﷺ to spare my life until you have consulted with the king,” cried the courtier.

“The note of a king can never be returned,” the governor replied and beheaded the courtier.

In the meanwhile, the man went to the king as usual. The king was surprised to see him, and asked, “What did you do with the note I had given you?”

The man explained, “Your courtier met me and asked for the note. I handed it over to him.”

The king enquired, “He mentioned that you disliked my breath.”

“That is incorrect,” replied the man.

“Then why did you place your hand over your mouth when you came to see me?” he asked.

“I did so to prevent you from smelling the garlic from the meal I had eaten at your courtier’s home,” the man explained.

The king continued, “You have spoken the truth. Return to your position of honour. The evil one has been more than sufficiently punished for his evil deed.”¹



وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

“They plan and Allāh plans, but Allāh is the best of planners.”

(Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān, verse 54)



¹ Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūmuddīn, vol 3, p 188



An Ideal Marriage

Qādhī Shuraih رضي الله عنه was appointed by ‘Umar رضي الله عنه as the chief judge of Kūfah. One day, he advised his friend, Sha'bī : “You should marry a woman from the tribe of Banū Tamīm because their women are exceptional.”

“How is that?” asked Sha'bī.

Qādhī Shuraih رضي الله عنه then related his personal life experience: One day, while returning from a funeral, I passed by a tent where I noticed an old woman with a very beautiful young girl. I requested a drink, although I was not thirsty.

The woman asked, “Would you like a drink of water, milk or nabīdh¹? ”

I replied, “Whatever is easiest for you.”

To this, the elderly woman instructed, “Bring him some milk as he appears to be a stranger in our locality.”

After drinking the milk, I addressed the woman, “Who is this young girl?”

She answered, “She is my daughter and her name is Zainab bint Hudair of the tribe of Banū Tamīm.”

“Is she single or married?” I asked.

“She is single,” was the reply.

“Will you marry her to me?” I asked.

“Yes, if you are compatible. She has an uncle to whom you should make your request,” she explained.

I returned home to take my afternoon nap, but I could not sleep as my mind was preoccupied with the thought of the woman and her daughter. I performed Zuhr and proceeded to visit a few of my colleagues. We performed ‘Aṣr and then left to meet the young girl’s uncle.

1 A type of drink prepared from grapes.

He welcomed us and asked the reason for my visit.

I replied, "I have come to ask for the hand of your niece, Zainab."

He replied, "Yes, she too is in favour of the marriage." He then performed the nikāh and we returned.

At home, doubts entered my mind and I thought to myself, "What have I done by marrying a woman of the tribe of Banū Tamīm? They are known for their hard-heartedness and uncouth nature." I thought of divorcing her immediately, but decided not to follow up my first foolish decision with a second. The rational thing I should do was to welcome her as my wife. If I liked her, I would praise Allāh ﷺ, otherwise I would divorce her.

After some time, a number of women from her tribe brought her to me. As she entered my home, I said to her, "When a bride arrives at the home of her husband, it is a sunnah for her and her husband to perform two rakāts of Ṣalāh and ask Allāh ﷺ for barakah in their marriage." I proceeded to perform wudhū and she did likewise. I then performed two rakāts of Ṣalāh and she prayed behind me.

After we had completed, I moved towards her, but she advised, "Please wait a moment. All praise be to Allāh ﷺ. I praise Him and seek His assistance. Blessings and salutations be upon Nabi ﷺ and his family. There were many women in your own tribe whom you could have married and there were many men in my tribe whom I could have married, but when Allāh ﷺ decides upon a matter, it certainly comes to be. I am now in your care, so do as Allāh ﷺ has commanded,

فِإِمْسَاكٍ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٍ بِإِحْسَانٍ

"Retain her with honour or release her with kindness."

(Sūrah Al-Baqarah, verse 230)

We are strangers to each other. I do not know your nature and temperament. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you would inform me of your likes and dislikes so that I could behave accordingly. With these words I end and I seek Allāh's ﷺ forgiveness for us and all the Muslims."

O Sha'bī, I had no choice but to reply to her in the form of a sermon, like she had done: "All praise be to Allāh ﷺ. I praise Him and seek His

assistance. Blessings and salutations be upon Nabi ﷺ and his family. You have said many things. If you abide by them, it will be my good fortune, but if you ignore them, it will serve as evidence against you. I love such and such things and I dislike such and such things. Spread the good you see in me and conceal the evil."

She then enquired, "What would you prefer with regard to my relatives visiting me?"

I replied, "I am a judge and I do not want my in-laws to dictate things to me, neither would I like them to be estranged from me." She later sent a message to her family, saying that they should not visit her for the next year.

She further enquired, "Which of your neighbours would you like to enter your home and which ones would you dislike?"

I advised, "So and so are pious and so and so are bad company."

We began our married life in this manner and I enjoyed every new day more than the previous day. After one year had passed, I returned from the court one day, and noticed an old woman advising my wife.

I asked, "Who is this, Zainab?"

She replied, "This is my mother." We greeted and I welcomed her to our home.

Her mother then asked me, "What do you think of your wife?"

I replied, "She is the best wife a man could ever have. You have certainly taught her very good manners and brought her up well. May Allāh ﷺ reward your efforts."

She replied, "You will not find a woman of worse manners other than in two cases : when she enjoys the favours of her husband and when she gives birth to a child. If anything of your wife displeases you, reprimand her. There is nothing worse for men to have in their homes, than rebellious wives."

I assured her that her daughter was extremely well-mannered and trained.

She then enquired, "Would you like your in-laws to visit you?"

I replied, "Yes, they may do so."

My wife's mother would visit us every year and advise me in a similar manner. I lived with my wife for twenty years and was displeased with

her only once. Then too, I was at fault to a certain extent. This is what transpired. I performed my two rakāts before the Fajr Ṣalāh and noticed a scorpion in our home. I attempted to kill it, but only managed to confine it beneath a vessel. I quickly left for Ṣalāh with the instruction that she should not touch the vessel. Instead, she hastened towards it and moved it. The scorpion escaped and stung her. When I arrived home, I read the Mu‘awwadhatain¹ and rubbed her finger.

I had a neighbour who would beat his wife and this inspired me to compile some verses of poetry :

رأيت رجالاً يضربون نساءهم فشلت يميني يوم تضرب زينب

أَأَضْرَبْهَا مِنْ غَيْرِ ذَنْبٍ أَتَتْ بِهِ فَمَا الْعَدْلُ مِنِي ضَرَبَ مِنْ لَيْسَ يَذْنَبُ

فَزَيْنَبُ شَمْسُ وَالنِّسَاءُ كَوَاكِبُ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ لَمْ يَدْ مِنْهُنَّ كَوْكَبٌ

I have seen men beating their wives;

May my hand be paralysed the day it strikes Zainab;

How can I strike the one who has done no wrong?

What justice am I displaying by beating one who has not sinned?

Zainab is the sun and other women are stars;

When the sun rises, not a single star can be seen!²



The household of an Islamically disciplined couple radiates with true happiness and contentment.



A sound Islamic upbringing and education is one of the secrets of grooming an individual to become a perfect spouse.



¹ Two specific Sūrāhs of the Qur’ān (Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās) which, when recited, protect one from evil.

² Tārīkh Dimishq, vol 23, p 51, Qaṣaṣul ‘Arab, vol 2, p 97; Al-Muṣṭaṭraf Fī Kulli Fannim Muṣṭaṣraf



Honesty Draws Rewards

Unexpected Reward

Ibn 'Aqīl رض mentions : I once set out to perform Ḥaj. In the blessed lands, I found a pearl necklace strung with a red thread. Close by, I heard a blind man announcing a reward of a hundred dinārs for the person who returned it to him. I returned it and he requested me to take the reward, but I refused.

I then left for Syria and visited Baitul Maqdis. Enroute to Baghdād, I stopped at Aleppo, where I took refuge in a Masjid due to cold and hunger. Here I was ushered forward to perform the Ṣalāh. I later had a meal with members of the congregation.

It was the first of Ramaḍān, and they said to me : "Our Imām has passed on and we would like you to lead us in prayer for the remainder of the month." I agreed.

After a time, they mentioned to me that their previous Imām had a daughter of marriageable age. They suggested that I marry her and I agreed. After a year, she gave birth to our son, but fell critically ill immediately thereafter. One day, I was sitting by her side and looked carefully at the necklace she was wearing. To my amazement, it was the very same necklace strung with a red thread I had found many years ago.

I said to her, "This necklace has a story of its own," and I related the incident to her.

Tears filled her eyes and she asked, "Are you truly the man who found it? My father would cry and make du'ā' : 'O Allāh ﷺ, grant my daughter a husband like the man who returned this necklace to me.' Allāh ﷺ accepted

his du'a'." Soon thereafter, she passed away, and I inherited the necklace as part of her estate.¹

Ibn Mubārak's ابن مبارک Distant Trip to Return a Pen

Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ابن مبارک mentions : "I once borrowed a pen from a person in Syria and forgot to return it. I only remembered when I reached Marw (in Turkmenistan). I travelled all the way back to Syria² and returned it."³



An honest person refuses to submit to the temptation of his base desires to take that which does not belong to him. His reward often comes to him later in life through unexpected channels.



Extraordinary Patience

Forbearance of a Widow

Madā'inī once noticed a Bedouin woman of exceptional beauty, and the thought went through his mind that she was probably very happy. On the contrary, she explained that she was engulfed in sadness and anxiety.

"I was married and had two sons," she continued, "On the day of Eid, their father slaughtered a sheep. While playing, the elder son decided to show his younger brother how their father had slaughtered the animal. He took a knife and slit his brother's throat. When he saw the blood, he

1 Siyar Aa'lām An-Nubalā', vol 19, p 449; Tārīkhul Islam Dhahabī

2 The distance between Syria and Marw is at least a thousand kilometers.

3 Ṣifatūṣ Ṣafwah, p 774; Tārīkh Dimishq

realised his error and, out of fear, ran off into the mountains, where a wolf devoured him. The father went out in search of the boy and died of thirst. Like this, destiny has left me single."

Mada'inī then asked, "Have you been able to bear this with patience?"

She replied, "If the trial was perpetual, I would have been permanently sad. But, it is a wound that will heal."¹

Prince to Pauper

A group of people from the tribe of Banū 'Abs arrived at the court of Walīd ibn 'Abdul Malik. Amongst them was a blind man, and Walīd asked him how he lost his eyesight.

He explained : "I was the wealthiest person in my tribe. One day, I set out on a journey with my family and we spent the night in a valley. Due to excessive rain, the flood waters caused tremendous damage. I lost my entire family and wealth, except a young infant and a camel. Later, the camel became uneasy and ran off. I pursued it, leaving my child alone. I had not gone very far, when I heard the infant crying out. I hastened back to find a wolf devouring the infant. In frustration, I decided to at least capture my camel, but it kicked at me, frantically. In the process, I lost my eyesight. In one night, I lost my entire family, my wealth and my eyesight."

After hearing the story, Walīd ordered, "Take him to meet 'Urwah ibn Zubair رض so that 'Urwah رض could meet a person who had been afflicted with a greater tribulation than himself."

'Urwah رض had been on a visit to Walīd, when he lost his son, Muhammad ibn Urwah رض, after he was kicked to death by one of Walīd's horses. Soon thereafter, 'Urwah رض was forced to amputate his leg because of a wound he sustained. He returned reciting the verse,

لَقَدْ لَقِيْنَا مِنْ سَفَرَنَا هَذَا نَصَبَا

"Surely, we have suffered much fatigue in this journey of ours."
(Sūrah Al-Kahf, verse 62)

1 Az-Zawājir 'An Iqtirāfil Kabā'ir, vol 1, p 269; Al-Kabā'ir

He would then remark, “Allāh ﷺ granted me four sons and has taken back only one. He granted me four limbs, two hands and two feet, and has taken only one. All praise be to Allāh ﷺ for granting me three sons and three limbs out of four.”¹



Allāh ﷺ has the power to change conditions as and when He wills.

إِنَّمَا يُؤْفَى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرُهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

“Verily, those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without measure.” (Sūrah Az-Zumar, verse 10)



Being Proactive

Once Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham رضي الله عنه met Shaqīq Balkhī رضي الله عنه in Makkah and asked, “What made you devote all your time to the worship of Allāh ﷺ?”

Shaqīq Balkhī رضي الله عنه replied, “I was once walking through a hot desert land, when I noticed a bird whose wings were broken off. I decided to wait and see how it would obtain food. I sat close by and watched carefully. After some time, another bird arrived and placed a locust from its mouth into the mouth of the bird that could not fly. This made me ponder. The Being that sent a healthy bird to feed a sick bird in a dry desert land, is more than able to provide me with sustenance wherever I may be. I then left all forms of earning and devoted myself to worship.”

¹ Wafayātul Aa'yān, vol 3, p 255; 'Uyūnul Akhbār; Tārīkh Dimishq

After hearing the story, Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham ﷺ asked, “O Shaqīq, why did you not choose to become like the healthy bird? That would have been the better of the two options. Did you not hear the Ḥadīth of Nabī ﷺ?

الْيَدُ الْعُلَيْلَا خَيْرٌ مِّنَ الْيَدِ السُّفْلِ

‘The upper hand is better than the lower hand.’¹

It is a sign of a believer that he strives for the best in all matters in order to reach the status of the pious servants of Allāh ﷺ.”

Shaqīq Balkhī ﷺ attentively heard the advice and then grasped the hand of Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham ﷺ, saying, “You are our teacher!”²



The hand that gives is better than the hand that receives.



Repentance Before Death

A man from the Banī Isrā’īl, by the name of Kifl, was a habitual sinner. A woman once came to him to ask for help. He agreed to give her sixty dinārs on condition that she allowed him to fulfil his desires with her. In desperation, she agreed. As he was about to proceed with his evil intention, she began to tremble and cry.

He asked, “Why are you crying like this? Have I forced you to do this?”

She replied, “No, but I have never committed such an indecent act before.”

¹ Bukhārī

² Tārīkh Dimishq, vol 23, p 135; Al-Wāfi Bil Wafāyāt

He asked, "Then why are you committing such an act now?"

She replied, "Desperation has compelled me to do so."

Her words had an effect upon him and he allowed her to leave, saying, "You may keep the dinārs I have given you."

He then exclaimed, "By Allāh, never again will Kifl disobey Allāh ﷺ!" That very night, he passed away. The next morning, Allāh ﷺ caused a message to be inscribed on his door, which read, "Allāh ﷺ has forgiven Kifl."¹



Allāh's ﷺ mercy has no bounds.



The Bare-footed Saint

During the days when Bishr Al-Hāfi رض had not yet received spiritual guidance, he was once in a gathering of friends at his home. In the midst of the noise, liquor, music and frivolity, a pious man happened to pass by and knocked at the door. A slave-girl answered, and he asked, "Is the owner of this home a free man or a slave?"

She replied, "He is a free man."

He replied, "Of course! Had he been a slave, he would have adopted the manners of a true servant and kept away from such futile and frivolous forms of entertainment."

Bishr رض overheard the conversation and quickly jumped to his feet. He headed for the door bare-footed, but the pious man had already left. He asked the slave-girl what had transpired, and she explained what he had said.

¹ Kitābut Tawwābīn, p 94

“In which direction did he go?” he asked. She directed him, and he left in pursuit of the man.

When he finally caught up with him, he asked, “My master, did you come to my door and speak to the slave-girl?”

“Yes,” he replied.

“Please repeat the words you uttered,” Bishr ابن فاراج requested. The man obliged.

Bishr ابن فاراج was so taken aback by his words, that he fell to the ground and began to cry out, “No, I am a slave, I am a slave, I am a slave!”

From then onwards, he would walk without shoes and people began calling him Bishr Al-Ḥāfi ابن فاراج, ‘the bare-footed one.’ When asked why he did not wear shoes, he would reply, “My master, Allāh عز وجل guided me when I was bare-footed and I will remain in this condition till death.”¹



A wise choice of words and a sincere intention are effective tools in influencing people.



A Young Man Rejects a Life of Luxury

Abdullāh ibn Faraj Al-Ābid says : I once required the services of a builder for a few days and arrived at the market in search of one. After much effort, I found a young man with a bucket and spade. He was dressed in a woollen cloth and an apron.

I asked him, “Would you like to do some work for me?”

“Yes,” he replied.

“How much would you like to be paid?” I asked.

¹ Kitābūt Tawwābīn, p 223

“A dirham and a dāniq¹,” he replied.

“Fine. Come along then,” I said.

“I have a condition though,” he advised.

“What is that?” I asked.

He explained, “When the time for Zuhr Ṣalāh arrives and the Mu’adh-dhin calls out the Adhān, I will leave, perform wudhū, perform my Ṣalāh in the Masjid in congregation and then return. I will do likewise for ‘Aṣr Ṣalāh.”

I agreed, and he came along to our home. I helped him carry some of the material to the building site and he then commenced with the work I had assigned to him. He did not speak to me any further, until the Mu’adh-dhin called out the Zuhr Adhān.

He then said, “O slave of Allāh ﷺ, the Mu’adh-dhin has called out the Adhān.”

“You may proceed,” I said.

He left, performed his Ṣalāh, and then returned to resume his work. When ‘Aṣr time arrived, he again left, performed his Ṣalāh and returned. He continued working till the end of the day. I then counted out his wage and he left.

After a time, I again required the services of a builder. My wife advised me to acquire the services of the same young man, as he had performed his job well. I returned to the market in search of him, but he was nowhere to be seen. I asked around, and was informed that he only came to the market on Saturdays. I left and returned on Saturday. He agreed to work for me as he had done before. When he had completed his work, I counted out his wage. I intended to give him more than we had agreed upon, but he refused. I insisted, and this annoyed him. He began to leave. I realised my error and convinced him to take the agreed wage.

After some time, we again required his services. I left for the market on a Saturday, but could not find him. I asked around, and was informed that he was ill. I was directed to his place of residence and proceeded to visit him. He had rented a room that belonged to an old woman. She explained that he had been ill for a number of days. I entered his room

1 A sixth of a dirham.

and found him lying down, with a brick serving as his pillow. I greeted him and asked if I could assist him in any way.

He replied, "Yes, please. After I have passed away, sell this spade and wash this cloth and apron of mine. You may then use them for my burial shroud. You should also cut open the pocket of my gown, wherein you will find a ring. You should then await the emergence of Hārun Ar-Rashīd, the Khalīph, and ensure that he notices you. Show him the ring, and he will then call you. You should then hand over the ring to him. Please do as I have advised, only after I have been buried."

After he had passed away, I did as he had requested. I then waited for an opportunity when Hārun Ar-Rashīd would emerge and sat at a prominent position so that he would notice me. As he passed by, I exclaimed, "Amīrul-Mu'minīn, I have a trust in my possession which I need to hand over to you," and I showed the ring to him. He beckoned to his attendants to escort me to his palace. Later that day, when he was alone, he called for me and asked, "Who are you?"

I replied, "My name is 'Abdullāh ibn Al-Farāj."

He then asked, "From where did you get this ring?"

I related the incident of the young man and he began to cry to such an extent, that I pitied him. When he had regained his composure, I asked, "Who was the young man to you?"

He replied, "My son."

In astonishment I asked, "But why did he live a life so different to yours?"

He explained, "He was born before I became the Khalīph. He received an outstanding upbringing and learnt the Qur'ān and other branches of knowledge. When I rose to the position of Khalīph, he left me and refused to accept any of the worldly things I offered him. I, therefore, decided to hand over this exquisite sapphire ring to his mother, saying, 'Give this to him. He may require some money in the future and this will be of benefit to him.' I knew that he respected his mother immensely and would not refuse her request. When she passed away, I lost all contact with him."

That night, he requested me to take him to the grave of his son. He sat there for a long time, crying profusely. When the time for Fajr arrived, we

rose and left. I would then accompany him every night to the grave and we would return together.¹



An intelligent person is one who knows that contentment does not exist in worldly luxuries, but in the worship and obedience of Allāh ﷺ.



Introspection

Self-Criticism

Mālik ibn Dhaigham narrates : Riyāḥ Al-Qaisī رياض القيسي came to visit my father after ‘Aṣr Ṣalāh. I said to him, “My father is asleep.”

He remarked, “Can a person sleep at this time of the day? Is this the time to sleep?” He then turned and left.

I sent a person to pursue him and ask whether we should awaken my father. The person returned after a long wait, when the sun had already set.

I asked, “You certainly took a long time returning. What did you say to him?”

He replied, “He was too busy to listen to what I had to say. I managed to meet up with him, as he was entering the grave-yard. I then heard him rebuking himself, ‘You asked whether anybody could sleep at this time. What gave you the right to ask such a question? A person has the choice of sleeping whenever he chooses to! You asked whether this was the time for sleeping. How do you know that this was not the appropriate time for sleeping? Why did you speak out of turn? Why did you ask a question that

¹ Kitābut Tawwābīn, p 187

was of no benefit to you? You will now take an oath to Allāh ﷺ which you will not break, except due to illness or insanity: You will not sleep on a pillow for an entire year. You are indeed an evil man. Have you no shame? You reprimand others, but you do not abstain from your own wrongs!" He then began to weep bitterly. He was totally unaware of my presence. I then left him alone and returned."¹

Answerability to Allāh ﷺ

Qādhi Bakkār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ was a righteous judge. After passing judgement every day, he would isolate himself, ponder over the witnesses who had testified and the judgement he had passed, and then begin to cry. He would address himself, "Bakkār! Two parties brought their dispute to you, together with their witnesses and you delivered judgement. How will you answer to Allāh ﷺ for this on the day of Qiyāmah?" He would also preach to those who were about to take an oath in his court by reciting the verse from the Qur'ān,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَئْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قِلِيلًا أُولَئِكَ لَا خَالَقُ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيُهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

"Verily, those who purchase a small gain at the cost of Allāh's ﷺ Covenant and their oaths, they shall have no portion in the Hereafter (Paradise). Allāh ﷺ will neither speak to them, nor look at them on the Day of Qiyāmah, nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful torment." (Sūrah Āl-'Imrān, verse 77)²



One of the primary teachings of tasawwuf³ is to constantly engage in self-criticism and evaluation, as it purifies the soul from sin.



1 Ḫifatūṣ Ṣafwah p 689

2 Al Wāfi Bil Wafayāt, vol 10, p 118

3 Spiritual reformation of the soul.



Power of a Parent's Du'ā'

Hasan ibn 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates : My father and I were making Ṭawāf¹ of the Ka'bah one pitch-black silent night, when suddenly we heard a man supplicating to Allāh عَزَّوَجَلَّ. His voice was filled with sadness and he recited the following couplets :

يا من يحيب دعا المضطر في الظلم يا كاشف الضر والبلوى مع السقم

قد نام وفدرك حول البيت واتبهوا وأنت عينك يا قيوم لم تنم

هب لي بجودك فضل العفو عن جرمي يا من إليه أشار الخلق في الحرم

إن كان عفوك لا يدركه ذو سرف فمن يجود على العاصين بالكرم

"O Being Who accepts the du'ā' of a destitute in the darkness!

O Being Who removes the distress and trial of sickness!

Yours guests sleep and awake around the Ka'bah!

While Your Eyes do not sleep, O One Who is always in existence!

Through Your generosity forgive my crime!

O Being to Whom the creation turns to in the Haram!

If Your forgiveness does not reach the one immersed in sin,

Then who else can show kindness to the sinners?"

My father turned to me and said, "My son, do you hear the voice of a man who is lamenting over his sins? Find him and bring him to me if you can." I left in search of him and eventually found him at the Maqām Ibrāhīm performing Ṣalāh.

¹ Circumambulation of the Ka'bah.

I said to him, "The cousin of Nabī ﷺ has requested to see you."

He shortened his remaining prayers, and then accompanied me. When I presented him to my father, he asked, "Where are you from?"

He replied, "I am an Arab."

My father then asked, "What is your name?"

He answered, "Munāzil ibn Lāhiq."

My father enquired, "What has happened to you? Why were you supplicating like this?"

He replied, "What can I relate of a man whose sins and wrongs have exposed him to the extent that he is now drowning in a sea of evil?"

My father requested him to share his story with us, and he agreed.

He explained, "I was a young man who was steeped in a life of futility and entertainment. My father would constantly advise me to abstain from the sins and frivolity of youth. He would remind me of Allāh's ﷺ power and His punishment of those who oppress themselves. Each time he advised me, I would strike him. One day, I was so angry by his admonition, that I struck him severely. In response, he took an oath to proceed to the House of Allāh ﷺ, cling to the cloth of the Ka'bah and make a du'ā' against me. He did exactly that and prayed :

يَا مَنْ إِلَيْهِ أَتَى الْحَجَاجُ قَدْ قَطَعُوا عَرَضُ الْمَهَامَهُ مِنْ قَرْبٍ وَمِنْ بَعْدٍ

إِنِّي أَتَيْتُكَ يَا مَنْ لَا يُخِيبُ مَنْ يَدْعُوكَ مُبْتَهِلًا بِالْوَاحِدِ الصَّمَدِ

هَذَا مَنَازِلُ لَا يَرْتَدُ عَنْ عَقْقِي قَبْلُ فَخُذْ بِحَقِّي يَا رَحْمَانَ مِنْ وَلْدِي

وَشَلَّ مِنْهُ بِحَوْلِ مِنْكَ جَانِبَهُ يَا مَنْ تَقْدِسُ لَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يُلْدَ

"O that Being to Whom the Ḥujjāj come,

Traversing desert lands from far and near!

I have come to You, O Being Who does not reject those who ask

And supplicate to Him, Who is the One, the Independent!

This is the place of acceptance.

So, take what is due to me from my son,

And cause half of his body to be paralysed.

O One Who is pure, Who begets not, nor was He begotten."

By Allāh, as soon as my father completed his supplication, half of my body became paralysed. I realised my sin and begged and pleaded with him to forgive me. He finally agreed and said that he would do so at the very place he had made du'ā' against me. He set out on a camel and I followed close by. When we arrived at Al-Arāk¹, a bird flew off from a nearby tree frightening the camel. The camel ran off throwing my father onto the rocky ground. His head was severely injured and he passed away. I buried him and continued on the journey in a state of sadness. My greatest fear is that I will be cursed and remembered for my disobedience to my father."

Hasan ibn 'Alī رض continues, "My father then consoled him, performed two rakāts of Ṣalāh and begged Allāh عز وجل to accept his du'ā' in favour of the young man. After a short while, the man was completely cured of his paralysis and my father said to him, "Had your father not agreed to make du'ā' in your favour, I would not have done so."²



Parents' du'ās are readily accepted by Allāh عز وجل. Fortunate are those who please their parents and receive du'ās in their favour.



¹ A place close to Makkah.

² Kitābut Tawwābīn, p 244



An Honest Trader

Muhammad ibn Munkadir was a cloth merchant. He used to sell two qualities of a certain type of cloth called Shiqāq for five and ten dirhams respectively. One day, he had to leave his business for a short while and entrusted his servant to attend to the business during his absence. A bedouin customer arrived to purchase some cloth and the servant mistakenly sold the cheaper cloth to him for ten dirhams, instead of five. When Ibn Munkadir returned, he noticed the cloth had been sold and realised the mistake.

He immediately reprimanded the servant, saying, “You have placed us into a difficult situation. Go and search for the bedouin and bring him to me.”

The servant went out and searched the entire day, until he found the bedouin. Ibn Munkadir said to him, “My servant made a mistake. He sold you the cloth priced at five dirhams for ten dirhams.”

The bedouin answered, “The transaction is over and I am satisfied with what I paid.”

Ibn Munkadir continued, “You may be satisfied, but I am not. I am giving you three options to choose from. Firstly, you may choose a new cloth worth ten dirhams. Secondly, we can return the five extra dirhams to you or thirdly, you may return the cloth to us and we shall return the ten dirhams to you.”

The bedouin replied, “I will keep the cloth and you may return the five dirhams to me.” Ibn Munkadir handed over the dirhams to him and he left.

The bedouin later enquired who the honest merchant was. When he was informed, he remarked, “There is no deity worthy of worship besides

Allāh ﷺ. It is the likes of such men through whose blessings we beseech Allāh ﷺ for rain during times of drought.”¹



Honesty in business creates a healthy social structure that is based on morality, integrity and stability. Nabī ﷺ said: “A truthful and trustworthy trader will be with the prophets, the true followers and the martyrs.”²



Giving Preference to Others

Equal in Generosity

Imām Wāqidī رحمه اللہ علیہ says : I had two very close friends, one of whom was a Hāshimī. At one time, I was destitute and the day of Eid was drawing near.

My wife said to me, “We can bear the hardships of poverty with patience, but my heart is overcome with sadness when I see our children living through such difficulty. They observe the children from our neighbourhood dressed in fine clothing on the day of Eid, whereas they have only torn rags to cover their bodies. If only you could make some means to dress them properly, it would be a consolation.”

I decided to write a note to my Hāshimī friend, requesting assistance from any of his excess wealth. He immediately sent me a sealed purse with an attached note, stating that it contained a thousand dirhams. My restlessness had hardly subsided, when a note reached me from my other friend complaining of similar difficulties. I immediately sent the sealed purse to my friend and left for the Masjid. I did not return home

¹ Qūṭul Qulūb, vol 2, p 267

² Tirmidhī

that night as I was too ashamed to face my wife. When I finally returned home, she welcomed me warmly and did not rebuke me.

After a short while, my Hāshimī friend arrived with the sealed purse in his hand, and said, “Tell me what happened after I sent you this purse.”

I related the events to him, and he said, “When I received your note, I sent you all the money that I possessed. Later, I wrote to our friend, requesting for help. He returned this sealed pouch to me in the very same condition as I had sent it to you.”

Imām Wāqidī رض continues : We had circulated the thousand dirhams between us with the intention of helping each other. News of our pitiable condition reached Khalīph Ma'mūn. He sent seven-thousand dirhams to us as a gift with the instruction that each of us should receive two-thousand dirhams and my wife a thousand.¹

The Feelings of Others

Just before a couple had consummated their marriage, the wife was afflicted with smallpox. Her husband then complained of painful eyes and later said that he could no longer see. They remained as a married couple for twenty years in this condition, until the wife passed away. He then opened his eyes and remarked, “I could see all along, but I pretended to be blind to save my wife from the anxiety of knowing that I may dislike her appearance if I could see her.”²

Concern for Neighbours

'Abdullāh ibn Ukht Muslim ibn Sa'd رض says : I decided to proceed for Ḥaj, and my uncle handed me ten-thousand dirhams with the instruction that they should be distributed to the poorest household in Madīnah. When I arrived, I asked around, and was directed to a particular home. I knocked at the door and a woman opened.

She asked, “Who are you?”

I replied, “I am from Baghdād and have ten-thousand dirhams in my possession. I have been instructed to hand these over to the poorest

1 Wafayātul Aa'yān, vol 4, p 349

2 Ar-Risālatul Qushairiyah, p 263

household in Madīnah, and I was directed to your home. Please take them."

She said, "The person who sent you with this money specified that it should be given to the poorest household. The family next door is more deserving than us."

I proceeded to the family next door. I knocked, and a woman answered. I explained the reason for my coming, and she replied, "Our neighbour and us are equally poor. You should distribute the money between us equally."¹

Seeing to the Comfort of Others

İbrāhīm ibn Ad-ham رض was once on a journey with three companions, when they arrived at a Masjid and took refuge therein. It was desert terrain and the night was bitterly cold. The entrance to the Masjid had no door. The three companions soon fell asleep and İbrāhīm ibn Ad-ham رض stood in the doorway the entire night.

When they enquired from him the next morning as to why he had not slept, he replied, "I was afraid that the cold wind might disturb your sleep and stood in the doorway as a shield."²



Assisting others and receiving du'ās brings happiness in this world, in addition to the great rewards promised in the Hereafter.



1 Şifatuş Şafwah, p 372

2 At-Tabṣirah, vol 2, p 279



Obedience to a Prophetic Command

Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah ﷺ narrates : I proposed to a certain woman and mentioned this to Nabī ﷺ.

He asked, “Have you seen her?”

I replied, “No.”

He advised, “Go and have a look at her, because there will be a greater probability of a positive union between you in this way.” I left and arrived at the home of her parents. She was in her private quarters.

I said, “Nabī ﷺ has advised me to have a look at your daughter.”

The parents remained silent, but the young woman raised the curtain of her chamber and said, “If the Nabī of Allāh ﷺ ordered you to see me, you may do so and if he has ordered you not to see me, then I too disapprove of it.”

I then glanced at her and decided to marry her.¹



Obedience to the teachings of Nabī ﷺ is the only path of success.



¹ Tārīkh Dimishq, vol 60, p 53; Baihaqī



Environments Change Hearts

During the days of British rule in India, the Jaman canal was dug. It stretched from Raipur to Saharanpur and via Kandlah to Delhi. During the course of excavation, one of the diggers found a gold saari¹ close to Nanota. It was long and thick and obviously quite valuable. The diggers handed it over to the water-carrier, who was their supervisor. He in turn, presented it to the Englishman, who was heading the entire operation. He took possession of it and recorded the details of the find. People who heard about the matter, were amazed at the honesty of the water-carrier and the diggers, as they could easily have concealed the saari, sold it and divided the proceeds amongst themselves.

Approximately twenty years later, a case was brought before the same Englishman, who was now the magistrate of the district of Muzaffarnagar. It involved a water-carrier who was accused of murdering a young woman in order to steal her two earrings, which he thought were made of gold. He had stolen the earrings from her and thrown her into a well. As soon as the water-carrier entered the court, the magistrate recognised him as the water-carrier who had brought the saari to him many years ago. The accused pleaded guilty to his crime.

The magistrate asked him, "How is it that you have perpetrated such an evil crime, whereas you were once an honest man?"

He replied, "At that time, we regarded theft and misappropriation to be worse than eating the flesh of swine. Nowadays, things have changed for the worse. We now steal whatever we can."

The magistrate dismissed the case on certain grounds and concluded, "Such deterioration in morals is as a result of the actions of the English government."²

1 A type of cloth worn by women in India.

2 Āp Beti, vol 6, p 110



Conditions may change for the worse, but a Muslim should ensure that his morals and Islamic principles are never compromised.



Wisdom and Intellect

Wisely-guided

There was once a man in Kūfah, who made the blasphemous statement that 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān ﷺ was a Jew. When Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ heard about his claim, he approached him and said, "I have come with a marriage proposal for your daughter."

The man asked, "Who is the prospective suitor?"

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ replied, "He is a man of status who is wealthy and generous. In addition, he is a *Hāfiḍh* of the Qur'ān, he performs long rakāts of Tahajjud Ṣalāh and cries profusely out of the fear of Allāh ﷺ."

The man exclaimed, "I would have been contented with far less than this."

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ continued, "But, there is one thing that I have not disclosed about him."

The man asked, "What is that?"

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ replied, "He is a Jew."

The man asked in astonishment, "Do you want me to marry my daughter to a Jew?"

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ asked, "You will not do so?"

He replied, "I will never do so."

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ asked, "But Nabī ﷺ married two of his daughters to 'Uthmān ﷺ, who you claim was a Jew!"

The man realised his error and cried, “I seek forgiveness from Allāh ﷺ for my error.”¹

Ingenious Explanation

Iyās ibn Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه was a judge who was renowned for his wisdom and insight. Many incidents have been narrated regarding his court cases and judgements. One day, a farmer approached him, and asked, “Please inform me if wine is ḥalāl (permissible) or ḥarām (prohibited)?”

Iyās رضي الله عنه replied, “It is ḥarām.”

The man asked, “How can it be ḥarām? Please tell me if dates are ḥalāl or ḥarām?”

Iyās رضي الله عنه replied, “Ḥalāl.”

The man then asked, “Is so-and-so plant ḥalāl or ḥarām?”

Iyās رضي الله عنه replied, “Ḥalāl.”

The man then asked, “Is water ḥalāl or ḥarām?”

Iyās رضي الله عنه replied, “Ḥalāl.”

The man then asked, “What is the difference then? Wine is made from dates, plants and water. How can all the ingredients be ḥalāl and the final product ḥarām?”

Iyās رضي الله عنه asked, “If I take a handful of sand and throw it at you, will it cause you any pain?”

The man replied, “No.”

Iyās رضي الله عنه asked, “If I take a handful of water and throw it at you, will it cause you pain?”

The man replied, “No.”

Iyās رضي الله عنه then asked, “If I take a handful of straw and throw it at you, will it cause you pain?”

The man replied, “No.”

Iyās رضي الله عنه then asked, “If I now mix the sand, water and straw, compress the mixture into a brick and leave it to dry, and then throw it at you, will it cause you pain?”

The man replied, “Yes, it would hurt me and may even kill me.”

¹ Tārīkh Baghdađ, vol 15, p 498; Ḥabaqātus Saniyyah

Iyās ﷺ explained further, “Just as a brick will only cause pain when its constituents are combined, dates, water and plants only when combined and left to ferment, will produce wine which is ḥarām.”¹

Dishonesty Exposed

A man decided to proceed for Ḥaj and left a considerable amount of wealth in trust with a man known to be trustworthy. After returning from Makkah, he requested for his money, but the man said that he knew nothing about it. The ḥāfi went to Iyās ibn Mu‘āwiya ﷺ and related the entire incident to him.

Iyās ﷺ asked, “Does he know that you have approached me?”

He replied, “No.”

Iyās ﷺ asked, “Have you mentioned the dispute to anyone?”

He replied, “Nobody knows about it besides us.”

Iyās ﷺ advised, “Return after two days and ensure that you do not mention the case to anyone.”

Iyās ﷺ then called the man with whom the money had been left in trust and said, “A large amount of wealth has reached me. I would like to hand it over to you for safekeeping. Is your home secure enough?”

The man replied, “Yes.”

Iyās ﷺ continued, “Good! I advise that you arrange a place for it to be kept and also organise a group of men to carry it to your home.” The man agreed and left.

After two days, the ḥāfi returned to Iyās ﷺ, who instructed him, “Proceed to your adversary and ask him for your wealth. If he returns it, then you have achieved your goal. If he refuses, then say to him that you will inform Judge Iyās ﷺ about the matter.”

The ḥāfi proceeded, as instructed, and warned that he would complain to the judge about the matter. Quickly, the man returned the money to the ḥāfi, as he feared that his reputation in the sight of the judge would be tarnished. The ḥāfi took possession of it and advised Iyās ﷺ that his money had been returned. After a time, the man arrived at the court of Iyās ﷺ, who rebuked him severely for his deceptive conduct.²

1 Tahdhībul Kamāl, vol 3, p 414

2 Al-Adhkiyā', p 80

Amazing Insight

A man once placed an amount of money in trust with another person. When he requested it, the man refused to hand it over. Both presented their respective cases to Iyās ﷺ.

The plaintiff said, “I handed over my money in trust to him.”

Iyās ﷺ asked, “Were there any witnesses?”

The plaintiff replied, “No. I handed over the money to him at such and such a place, where nobody else was present.”

Iyās ﷺ asked, “Was there any distinguishing feature at the place that you can remember?”

The plaintiff replied, “Yes. There was a particular tree at that point.”

Iyās ﷺ advised him, “Proceed to the place and find the tree. Perhaps Allāh ﷺ will make something apparent to you there and you will reclaim your wealth. Perhaps, you buried your money close to the tree and forgot the spot. When you see the tree, you may remember the spot.”

The man left and Iyās ﷺ requested the defendant to be seated until he returned. Iyās ﷺ continued with other court matters. After an hour, he suddenly turned to the defendant and asked, “Do you think that your adversary would have reached the place of the tree by now?”

The defendant replied, “No.”

Iyās ﷺ reprimanded the man, as he could only have known of the place where he had taken possession of the money, if he had been present there. The defendant then admitted his guilt. When the plaintiff returned, Iyās ﷺ explained the situation and advised him to take possession of his money from the defendant.¹

An Intelligent Enquiry and an Equal Response

A woman came to ‘Umar ﷺ and said, “O Amīrul-Mu’minīn, my husband fasts during the day and performs voluntary Ṣalāh during the night. It is difficult for me to find fault with him because he is devoted to the worship of Allāh ﷺ.”

‘Umar ﷺ replied, “Your husband is indeed a good man!”

She repeated her statement a number of times and each time he replied in the same manner.

¹ Al-Adhkiyā’, p 81

Ka'b ibn Sawar Al-Asadī رض overheard the discussion and remarked, “Amīrul-Mu'minīn, she is not complimenting her husband, but complaining that he is not fulfilling his marital obligations towards her.”

‘Umar رض said to Ka'b رض, “Since you have understood her complaint, you may pass judgement in the matter as well.” Ka'b رض called for her husband and explained that his wife was complaining about him.

He asked, “Is she complaining with regard to the food or drink in our home?”

Ka'b رض replied, “Neither of the two.”

The woman continued to present her case in poetic verse :

يَا أَيُّهَا الْقَاضِي الْحَكِيمُ رُشْدُهُ.....أَلَيْ خَلَّيْلِي عَنْ فِرَاشِي مَسْجِدُهُ

زَهَدَهُ فِي مَضْجِعِي تَبَعُّدُهُ.....نَهَارُهُ وَلَيْلُهُ مَا يَرْدُدُهُ

فَلَسْتُ فِي أَمْرِ النِّسَاءِ أَمْهَدُهُ.....فَاقْضِ الْقَضَا يَا كَعْبُ لَا تُرَدِّدُهُ

“O wisely-guided judge,

My beloved has been diverted from my bed by his place of Salāh.

His worship has led him to withdraw from my place of rest.

His night and day has deprived him of sleep.

It is not possible for me to praise him in female matters.

O Ka'b, deliver such a verdict which is without doubt.”

The husband then replied to her in a similar poetic form,

زَهَدَنِي فِي فَرْشِهَا وَفِي الْحِجَلِ.....أَنِّي امْرُؤٌ أَذْهَلَنِي مَا قَدْ نَزَلَ

فِي سُورَةِ النَّحْلِ وَفِي السَّيْعِ الطُّولِ.....وَفِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ تَخْوِيفُ جَلَلِ

“I have withdrawn from her bed and her chamber;

I am a man whose mind has been captured by the revealed verses,

In Sūrah Nahl and the first seven Sūrahs,

As well as the verses of admonition in the Book of Allāh عز.”

Ka'b ﷺ then gave his verdict by advising the husband,

إِنَّ لَهَا حَقًا عَلَيْكَ يَا رَجُلٌ

نَصِيبُهَا فِي أَرْبَعٍ لِّمَنْ عَقَلْ

فَأَعْطِهَا ذَاكَ وَدَعْ عَنْكَ الْعِلْمَ

“She has a right over you, O husband,
A man of understanding will share one in four days with her.
Grant her this right and leave your excuses.”

He continued to explain, “Allāh ﷺ has made it permissible for a man to be married to a maximum of four wives only. Therefore, you may devote three nights to worship and the remaining night should be spent with her.”

‘Umar ﷺ exclaimed in amazement, “By Allāh, I cannot decide which was more amazing, your understanding of her complaint, or your judgement settling the dispute. I hereby appoint you as the judge of Baṣrah.”¹



Fortunate is that person who has been blessed with knowledge as well as wisdom. Allāh ﷺ mentions in the Qur’ān,

وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوْتَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

“And he to whom wisdom is given, has truly received abundant good.”
(Sūrah Al-Baqarah, verse 269)



¹ Al-Āḥkāmus Sultāniyyah, p 122; Al-Adhkiyā’



R^epaying Kindness

Abbās, the chief of police of Khalīph Ma'mūn, narrates: One day, I was present in the court of the Amīrul-Mu'minīn in Baghdād, before whom stood a man heavily bound in iron chains. When the Khalīph noticed me, he said, "Abbās, take this man with you. Keep him in confinement and take special care that he does not escape. Bring him back to me tomorrow."

His chains were so restrictive, that he could not move an inch. I called for some of my security personnel, and they carried him away. I thought over the Khalīph's instruction of guarding the prisoner at all cost, and concluded that it would be best to keep him confined in my own house. I instructed them to leave him in a room which I pointed out to them.

When they had left, I asked him where he was from and why he had been captured and bound in chains.

He replied, "I am from Damascus."

I said, "May Allāh ﷺ bless Damascus and reward its inhabitants well. What is your name and occupation?"

He asked, "Why do you ask such a question?"

I replied, "Do you know so-and-so person?"

He asked, "How do you know so-and-so person?"

I said, "I had interacted with him at one time."

He enquired, "Please inform me what happened between the two of you?"

I explained, "Many years ago, I was in a position of authority in Damascus and the inhabitants revolted against us. All the state officials were forced to flee and the ruler too escaped, by lowering himself down from his palace using a basket of palm leaves. I too fled from a crowd of men who were thirsty for my blood. I literally ran for my life from street to street. I managed to escape from them temporarily and searched for

a place to hide. Suddenly, I noticed the man whom I have mentioned to you, sitting at the door of his home.

I called out to him, "Please assist me and Allāh ﷺ will assist you!"

He replied, "Do not worry! You may enter my house." I quickly entered and his wife instructed me to hide in a certain room, and I complied. The man remained seated at the door. I had scarcely gathered my breath, when I heard my pursuers at the door. They insisted that I was hiding in the house and rushed in. They searched each room, except the room I was hiding in. They demanded that the door be opened, but the woman yelled out from within, warning them against intruding upon her privacy. They accordingly left. After a few minutes, the mob dispersed and the man entered the room. I could barely stand, as my feet trembled out of fear. Both husband and wife reassured me of my safety and I prayed for their prosperity for having saved my life.

They hosted me with amazing hospitality in their home for four months. They assigned a separate room to me and saw to my every need with absolute kindness and pleasure. When the danger had passed, and peace was restored, I asked them for permission to leave, so that I could locate my servants and get a sense of the prevailing conditions. I went out and discovered that all my servants had dispersed. I returned to my host. During all this time, they never enquired about my occupation or status. They did not even know my name and sufficed upon addressing me by a respectable title.

I informed them of my intention to return to Baghdād. The man advised me that there was a caravan due to depart for Baghdād in the next three days. I thanked them profusely for all their assistance and said, "You showered your kindness upon me during my entire stay. I take an oath in Allāh's ﷺ Name that I will never forget your kindness to me and will endeavour to the best of my ability to repay you."

My host immediately summoned his servant and asked for a horse and other provisions for a journey. I thought that they were intending to leave town for a few days, but I was wrong. They were preparing to see me off. On the day of my departure, he came to me before sunrise and said, "The caravan for Baghdād will be departing soon. I do not want you to be left behind."

I pondered how I would set out on the journey without any money or provisions. As I emerged from my room, they presented me with a bag of fine clothing and a pair of brand-new shoes. They then presented me with a few other items that I would require during my journey together with a sword and girdle, which my host tied around my waist. He loaded two bags onto a conveyance and handed me a note, stating that they contained five-thousand dirhams. He then advised me to mount the horse led by his servant, who would take me to the caravan and see to my other needs. The two of them apologised to me for any deficiencies on their part during my stay, and the man rode out with me to see me off. I set off for Baghdād with the hope of repaying my host's kindness one day.

After I reached Baghdād, I took up a post in the office of the Amīrul-Mu'minīn and did not have the opportunity to enquire about my hosts or show my appreciation to them. This is the reason why I am so anxious to learn about them from you."

The man listened to my story intently and said, "Allāh ﷺ has granted you the opportunity of repaying the kindness and generosity of that man without much difficulty."

I asked, "How is that possible?"

He replied, "I am that man. My lamentable condition has prevented you from recognising me." He then mentioned some of the circumstances regarding our meeting in Damascus, which convinced me of his identity.

I was so elated, that I rose and kissed him on his forehead. I asked, "But, how did you end up in this condition?"

He answered, "There was an uprising in Damascus similar to the one you had experienced there. The Amīrul-Mu'minīn sent an army to crush the revolt. I was named as one of the instigators, arrested, beaten severely and finally brought to Baghdād to face the Amīrul-Mu'minīn. I have no doubt that I will soon be killed. I was forced to leave my family without them knowing where I was being taken to. A servant of mine has followed me here and will return to Damascus soon, to inform my family of my whereabouts and status. He is residing at the home of so-and-so person. If you can send for him, I will be able to give him the necessary information. If you can fulfil this wish of mine, you will have exceeded

the kindness I displayed to you and more than fulfilled your promise of repaying me one day.”

I said to him, “May Allāh ﷺ have mercy upon you.” Later that night, I called for a blacksmith, who removed his chains. After he had bathed, I provided him with a suit of clean clothes and sent a servant to find his slave and bring him to us. When his slave arrived, he dictated his farewell message to his family, with tears in his eyes.

I then ordered my deputy to bring me ten horses and mules. I also ordered ten trunks which were to be filled with clothing, food and other provisions. I handed him a bag containing ten-thousand dirhams, and another smaller purse containing five-thousand dinārs. I finally ordered my deputy to escort him as far as Anbār, on the road to Damascus.

But the man said to me, “The Amīrul-Mu’mīn has charged me with treason. If you inform him of my escape, he will send his men to recapture and kill me.”

I replied, “Save yourself and allow me to handle other matters.”

But he insisted, “I will not leave Baghdād until I know what happens to you. If there is a need for me to present myself, I will do so.”

I turned to my deputy and said, “Escort him to such-and-such place in the city. If my life is spared, I will inform him accordingly, and if I am killed, I will have sacrificed my life for his, like he had sacrificed his for mine. Promise me that the money I have given to him will not be taken away from him and that you will try your utmost to let him leave Baghdād safely.”

My deputy escorted him to a secret hideout in the city, while I made preparations for certain death. I had just performed my Fajr Ṣalāh, when I received a message from Ma’mūn, asking me to bring the prisoner. I proceeded to the palace, where I found him waiting for us.

He asked, “Where is the prisoner?”

I remained silent and he repeated his question, angrily.

I replied, “Amīrul-Mu’mīn, will you please listen to me?”

He said, “If he has escaped, I will have you executed immediately.”

I continued, “The man did not escape. Listen to my story and you may then do as you please.”

He exclaimed, “Speak!”

I narrated my full story to him and said that I regarded it as my duty to repay the man for all the kindness he had shown to me. I terminated by producing my burial shroud which I had brought with me, saying, "If you pardon me, I will have repaid his kindness in equal measure and if you have me killed, I will have repaid him with my life."

After hearing my story, the Khalīph said, "He showed kindness to you without knowing you, whereas you only did so as a recompense to fulfil your promise to him. Please bring him to me so that I can personally repay him for his kindness to you."

I explained, "He is in a secret place here in Baghdađ and has promised not to leave until he receives news of my safety. He has insisted that if I need him to provide evidence in my favour, he would present himself."

Ma'mūn said, "This action of his is of greater merit than the first. Comfort him, allay all his fears and bring him immediately, so that I may reward him."

I departed and informed my friend regarding the Khalīph Ma'mūn's kind words and his request to see him.

He exclaimed, "Praise be to Allāh ﷺ, Who deserves to be praised in both favourable and unfavourable conditions." He then prayed two rakāts of Ṣalāh and we headed for the palace.

The Khalīph received him warmly and made him sit close to him. They discussed matters until lunch was served. Ma'mūn insisted that the man join him for the meal. They continued discussing the affairs in Damascus and Ma'mūn finally ordered that he be presented with ten horses, fully bridled, ten mules, ten bags with ten-thousand dinārs and ten slaves with conveyances. He further wrote a note addressed to the governor of Damascus, absolving him from the payment of taxes. Before departing, he requested the man to write to him about matters in Damascus from time to time.

Thereafter, whenever a courier arrived from Damascus with a letter from our friend, the Khalīph would say to me, "Abbās, a letter from your friend has arrived."¹

¹ Al-Mustaṭraf Fī Kulli Fannim Mustaṭraf, vol 1, p 240



Kindness and hospitality strengthens brotherhood.



Excellent Choice of a Marriage Partner

Jâbir narrates that the ruler of the time, Yazîd ibn Muâwiyah, sent a proposal for the daughter of Abû Dardâ' ﷺ. The proposal was rejected. One of the courtiers of Yazîd requested for permission from Yazîd to send a proposal for himself. Yazîd was not happy with the idea, but reluctantly gave his permission. This person then sent a proposal for her, and it was accepted. People could not understand why a ruler's proposal was rejected, while that of an ordinary person was accepted.

Abû Dardâ' ﷺ explained, "I looked towards the best interests of my daughter, Dardâ'. What would have happened to her if palace servants and slaves were at her service and everything around her was glitter and glamour? What would have been the status of her religious affairs at that time?"¹



Undisciplined exposure to wealth commonly produces men and women who are unduly attached to worldly pleasures, arrogant in their manner and reluctant to acknowledge their weaknesses. Many parents encourage their sons and daughters to select a marriage partner based on financial status, while little attention is placed upon religious standing. This very often leads to disastrous consequences with regard to their Islamic future as well as that of their offspring. On the other hand, spouses

¹ *Şifatus Şafwah*, p 227

whose religion takes priority over material things, are guided by Qur'ān and Sunnah at the crossroads of life. A marriage based upon religious principles, produces families that are concerned with permanent success in the Hereafter rather than the transitory pleasures of this fleeting world.



The Reality of Man

Yazīd ibn Muḥallab, was once walking boastfully in a fine suit of clothing. Muṭarrif عَلِيٌّ, a pious man of the time, observed this and addressed him, “Your manner of walking is disliked by Allāh عَزَّوَجَلَّ and His Nabi صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.”

“Do you know who I am?” Yazīd exclaimed arrogantly.

Muṭarrif عَلِيٌّ answered, “Yes, I certainly do.

أُولَكَ نَطْفَةٌ مُذْرَةٌ وَآخِرُكَ جِيفَةٌ قَذْرَةٌ وَأَنْتَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ حَامِلٌ عَذْرَةٍ

Your origin was a drop of impure semen. Your end will be a squalid corpse. Between these two periods you bear within you a load of filth.

Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abdullāh Al-Bassāmī ابْنِ الْبَسَّامِيِّ has summarised this in eloquent words of poetry :

عجبت من معجب بصورته وكان من قبل نطفة مذرعة

وفي غدٍ بعد حسن صورته يصير في الأرض جيفة قدره

وهو على عجبه ونحوته ما بين ثوبيه يحمل العذر

*“One who takes pride in his outer appearance surprises me,
When not long before he was a drop of impure semen.*

*Tomorrow, when his beauty fades,
He will be a squalid corpse in the grave.
Despite his conceit and arrogance,
He carries between his clothing a filthy load.”¹*



Realisation of one's origin, makeup and destination, is sufficient to remove pride and ostentation from one's personality.



Extraordinary Kindness

Shaikh Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Ar-Rifā‘ī رَبِّ الْمُلْكَ was sitting down and a cat fell asleep on a portion of the garment he was wearing. The time for Ṣalāh was approaching and he feared that the cat would be disturbed if he moved. He therefore, cut off the portion of the garment and left the cat to sleep upon it. When he returned from Ṣalāh, the cat had left. He then took the piece of cloth and sewed it back to his clothing, saying, “My clothing is the same as it had been before I cut it.”²

¹ Wafayātul Aa'yān, vol 6, p 284

² Ṭabaqātush Shāfi'iyyah Al-Kubrā, vol 6, p 24



The true servants and friends of Allāh ﷺ are cautious regarding any inconvenience caused to His creation.



Allāh ﷺ Changes Conditions

A wealthy couple was seated, ready to eat from a pot of roasted chicken, when a beggar arrived at their door. The husband went out and chased him away using harsh words. It so happened, that the husband's condition deteriorated soon thereafter, and he lost all his possessions and wealth. He even divorced his wife, who then married another man. The new couple was seated one day, about to begin eating from the roasted chicken before them, when they heard a beggar knock at the door.

The man said to his wife, "Present this chicken to him."

She went out to hand him the chicken, but returned with tears in her eyes.

Her husband asked why she was crying, and she replied, "That beggar was once my husband," and she related the incident when her previous husband had scolded a beggar who had knocked at their door.

Her husband listened to her story with interest and exclaimed, "By Allāh, I was that very same beggar."¹



قُلْ لِلَّهِمَّ مَا لِكَ الْمُلْكُ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزَعُ الْمُلْكَ مِنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ

¹ Al-Mustaṭraf Fī Kulli Fannim Mustazraf, vol 1, p 10

وَتُنْزِلُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرَ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“Say (O Nabi ﷺ): ‘O Allāh, Owner of the kingdom, You give dominion to whom You will, and You take away dominion from whom You will, and You give honour to whom You will, and You humiliate whom You will. In Your Hand is all good. Verily, You have power over all things.’” (Sūrah Al-’Imrān, verse 26)



Truthful in Speech

My Word is My Honour

Hurmuzān, the leader of the Persians, was brought to ‘Umar ﷺ as a prisoner. ‘Umar ﷺ addressed him, “I present Islam to you in good counsel for your immediate and future endeavours.”

Hurmuzān replied, “I believe firmly in the religion I currently follow. I have no inclination towards Islam.”

‘Umar ﷺ was about to behead him, but he requested, “Can I have a sip of water, instead of dying of thirst?”

‘Umar ﷺ instructed that he be given some water to drink.

With the water in his hand, he asked, “Am I safe until I drink it?”

“Yes,” replied ‘Umar ﷺ.

He then threw the water onto the ground and said, “Honour your word!”

‘Umar ﷺ replied, “You have my word. You shall be left alone until we think the matter over.”

At this, Hurmuzān said, “Now I proclaim that there is no deity worthy of worship besides Allāh and that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger. Whatever he proclaimed was the truth.”

'Umar ﷺ said, "You are now a Muslim, but what delayed you in accepting Islam?"

Hurmuzān answered, "I did not want people to think that I had accepted Islam out of fear."

Upon this, 'Umar ﷺ remarked, "The Persians have such intelligence which has entitled them to rule over vast dominions." 'Umar ﷺ then ordered that Hurmuzān be treated kindly.

'Umar ﷺ would then consult him regarding military matters dealing with the Persians.¹

Honesty Reforms Robbers

Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jīlānī رحمۃ اللہ علیہ says : Truth and honesty were the cornerstones of our home. When I left Makkah for Baghdað, in my quest for knowledge, my mother handed me forty dinārs and took an oath from me that I would always be truthful. Our caravan travelled safely until we reached Hamdaan, where we were attacked by a group of highway robbers.

While plundering the caravan, one of the robbers passed by me and asked, "What do you have with you?"

I replied, "Forty dinārs."

The man thought that I was joking and left me alone. A short while later, another robber noticed me and posed the same question. I again replied that I had forty dinārs. He was amazed and led me to their leader.

He began questioning me, "Why did you speak the truth?"

I replied, "My mother took an oath from me that I would always speak the truth and I fear being dishonest in this regard."

My words struck him like a thunderbolt. He began to scream and tear his clothing apart. He exclaimed, "You fear being dishonest regarding the oath you made to your mother, whereas I have no fear for the oath of Allāh!"

He then ordered that all the wealth and valuables stolen from the caravan be returned, and said, "Today, I repent to Allāh on your hands."

1 Al-'Iqdul Farīd, p 112; Nihāyatul 'Arab Fī Funūnil Adab

The remaining members followed their leader's example and also repented.¹



Truthful speech is an arrow that pierces the heart and shakes the soul.



Arrows of the Night

It is narrated that a certain king would frequently gather with his courtiers at the bank of a certain river close to his palace, and they would then entertain themselves with singing girls, wine and other evils of the day. It was during the time of the pious saint, Ḥasan ibn Yasār Al-Baṣrī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. One day, he decided to gather a number of his pious colleagues and they sat down in close proximity to the house of the king to recite the Qur'ān. They also began to praise Allāh ﷺ at the time when the music emanating from the palace became unbearable. A servant from the palace arrived and asked what they wanted.

Ibn Yasār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied, "Say to your master that he should immediately put a stop to these sinful actions or we shall fight him."

The servant returned to inform the king, who replied, "How do they propose to fight me when I have a huge army comprising of thousands of soldiers?" The servant relayed the message to the pious men.

Ibn Yasār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied, "We will fight him with the arrows of the night."

The messenger asked, "What are the arrows of the night?"

He replied, "The raising of hands in du'ā' to Allāh ﷺ."

¹ Nuzhatul Majālis, p 178

When the king was informed of this, he immediately stopped his evil practices and exclaimed, "We can never overpower such men."¹



Crying out to Allāh ﷺ and performing optional Ṣalāh during the darkness of the night, invite the mercy of Allāh ﷺ because of His love for sincerity and secrecy in doing good deeds.



Return to Your Garden

One day, a king climbed up to the top floor of his palace to admire the view from above. While looking out, his gaze fell upon a woman who was on the roof of a house close to the palace. Never in his life had he seen a more beautiful face. He enquired from one of his attendants who she was, and was informed that she was the wife of his slave, Firoze. As he climbed down, his heart was infatuated by her beauty. He immediately summoned Firoze and instructed, "Take this letter to so and so place and return to me once you have an answer."

Firoze took the letter home and placed it beneath his pillow. The next morning, he greeted his family and set out, completely oblivious of the plot hatched by his master. As soon as he had left, the king hastened to his house and quietly knocked at the door.

Feroze's wife asked, "Who is there?"

He replied, "It is the king, your husband's master." She opened the door. He entered and sat down.

She asked, "What brings the king to my door?"

He replied, "I have come as a visitor."

¹ *Mulṭaqatul Ḥikāyāt*, p 10

She replied, "I seek Allāh's ~~protection~~ protection from a visit of this nature. It holds no good."

He remarked, "Do you realise who I am? I am the king, the master of your husband!"

She replied, "I certainly know who you are. You are the king, but other kings before you were superior to you when they said,

سأترك ماءكم من غير ورد وذاك لكثره الوراد فيه

إذا سقط الذباب على طعام رفعت يدي ونفسي تشتهيه

وتحجتب الأسود ورود ماء إذا كان الكلاب ولعن فيه

ويرتبع الكريم خيص بطن ولا يرضي مسامحة السفهه

*"I will not enter your place of water;
Due to the large number that are in it already.*

*When the fly falls onto the food;
I withdraw my hand from it even though I desire it.*

*The slave avoids the water;
When the dog has licked it.*

*The honourable one will return with an empty belly;
But will not be pleased with the company of a fool."*"

She continued, "How eloquently a poet has said,

قل للذى شفـه الغرام بنا وصاحب الغدر غير مصحوب

والله لا قال قاتل أبداً قد أكل الليث فضلة الذيب

*Say to the one who speaks of love for us;
And the one who deceives, that they are always alone.*

*By Allāh, none has ever said,
the lion has devoured the faeces of the wolf."*"

She then said, "O king, you have come to drink from such a place from which your dog has already drank!" The king felt ashamed by her words and left her. In his haste, he forgot to take his shoes.

In the meantime, Firoze was on his way, but realised that he had forgotten to take the letter from beneath his pillow. He returned home, just as the king was leaving and noticed the king's shoes. Thoughts began to enter his mind and he realised that the king had actually sent him on the journey with an ulterior motive. He entered the house without a word, took the letter and continued on his way. When he had fulfilled the king's request, he returned. The king rewarded him with a hundred dinārs.

Firoze took the money and headed for the market, where he purchased a gift that would please his wife. He arrived home, greeted her and said, "Prepare for a visit to your parents' home."

"Why?" she asked.

"The king has presented a gift to us and I would like you to show it to your family," he replied.

"With pleasure," and she immediately stood up to leave for her parents' home.

They were naturally delighted to see their daughter and the gift she had brought with her. She stayed there for a month. During this time, her husband did not speak of her, nor was he at all grieved by his separation from her. Her brother finally approached Firoze, and asked, "Please inform us why you are displeased with her, or we will be forced to request the king to settle the matter."

Firoze replied, "If you desire a settlement then proceed. It is not as if I have not fulfilled any of her rights."

They requested a hearing at the court of the king and Firoze accompanied them. The judge was seated at the king's side as they entered.

The brother presented the case, "O Judge, I gifted this young man with a garden. Its walls were secure, it had a well with flowing water, and its trees bore tasty fruit. He ate the fruits, broke down the walls and damaged the well."

The judge turned to Firoze and asked, “What do you have to say to this?”

Firoze replied, “O Judge, I have returned the garden to him in a superior condition.”

The judge asked the brother, “Has he returned the garden to you in a superior condition?”

The brother replied, “Yes, he has. But, I desire to know why he has returned it?”

The judge asked, “Young man, what do you say to this?”

Firoze replied, “I did not return the garden because I disliked it. The truth of the matter is that, one day, I returned home and found that a lion had entered it. I feared that it would kill me, and I, therefore, abstained from entering.”

The king had been sitting quite casually, but suddenly sat up and said, “Firoze, return to your garden in peace and comfort. By Allāh, the lion entered your garden but did not leave any mark or trace therein. It did not touch anything, not even a fruit or a leaf. It remained only for a brief moment and then left without causing any harm. By Allāh, I have never seen the likes of a garden like yours, neither have I seen walls as secure as those that surround the trees therein.”

Firoze returned home and reunited with his wife, without the judge realising what had actually transpired between the king, Firoze and his wife.¹



A chaste woman is an invaluable blessing for her family and community.



This compilation of short stories has been completed by the grace and mercy of Allāh ﷺ. All praise belongs to Allāh ﷺ and peace and salutations be upon our beloved Nabī ﷺ.

¹ Al-Mustatraf Fī Kulli Fannim Mustaṣraf, vol 1, p 44

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¹ Al-Mustaṭraf Fī Kulli Fannim Mustaṣraf, vol 1, p 44

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